THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

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SPECULATION ENDS, HIMANTA BISWA SARMA TO BE ASSAM CM

Sarma was elected as the leader of the Legislature Party after the outgoing CM Sarbananda Sonowal proposed his name

HELPED BJP MAKE INROADS INTO NORTHEAST

Sarma (52) will take the oath of office on Monday. He was the convener of the North-East Democratic Alliance, a BJP-led front of anti-Congress parties, and Number 2 to Sonowal since 2016. Under his stewardship, the BJP made inroads into the Northeast and became the second party to form successive governments in Assam after its victory in 2021 Assembly election | P8

STRATEGIST REWARDED FOR RESULTS

- He established himself as BJP's chief strategist in Northeast after snatching power from right under the Congress' nose in Manipur
- Along with Sonowal, Sarma was a contender for the top job in Assam. His elevation is seen as recognition of his work and skills
- The NEDA had won 75 seats in the house of 126 in the recent polls

6 yrs

SINCE SARMA QUIT THE TARUN GOGOI-LED CONGRESS IN 2015 AND JOINED THE BJP

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Micro-planning needed for vax drive: Experts

The inoculation drive should be streamlined to ensure there are no hiccups, they say

IFFATH FATHIMA & RANJANI MADHAVAN @ Bengaluru

WITH vaccine supplies trickling in for the largest population segment, comprising those in the 18-44 age bracket, experts have warned the State Government to streamline the vaccination process and micro-manage it to ensure completion of the vaccination drive without hiccups. They have also called for putting in place a strong containment strategy alongside.

This follows major hiccups in vaccination supplies witnessed in the phase-2 of the drive wherein senior citizens had to face problems due to a sudden shortage of stocks with private medical centres and hospitals being asked to directly place orders with vaccine manufacturers. Not only did the situation create anxiety among those scheduled for their second dose, it also delayed administering the first dose to those in the 45-60 age-group. This has resulted in delays in the vaccination programme.

While the number of those vaccinated should have been far higher, had the supplies been without hiccups, Karnataka has so far vaccinated a total of 1,05,21,773 people since the programme was initiated on January 16 this year.

The state's population (as of October 1, 2020) is 6,66,27,000. So far, population segment which has the highest coverage is the 45-60 age bracket, with 37,22,263 getting the first dose and 4,42,409 getting their second dose. The seniors (aged above 60) are the next biggest segment. So far, 35,90,825 have received the first dose while 9,77,935 have received the second shot. At least 6,91,102 health care workers received the first dose and 4,47,584 have got the second one. Among frontline workers, 4,60,941 have had their first dose and 1,78,086 have got the second.

It is estimated that there are about 3.26 crore people in the state in the 18-45 age group, requiring 6.52 crore doses to cover both doses. Only 10,627 have received their first dose in this segment which was symbolically launched on May 1. To fulfill the requirements, the state government has placed an order for two crore doses of Serum Institute's Covishield and one crore doses of Bharat Biotech's Covaxin. P5

VACCINATIONS FOR 18+ FROM TODAY

Health Minister Dr K Sudhakar on Sunday said vaccination for the 18-44 age group will start in earnest on May 10. "Covid-19 vaccination will be provided to citizens in the 18-44 age group at all major government hospitals and medical colleges from Monday, May 10. All centres providing vaccination for this age group will have an exclusive session site earmarked for them. Vaccine will be provided to only those who have registered and who have scheduled an appointment on the CoWIN portal and Arogya Setu."

A family of migrant workers leaves Bengaluru with their belongings on Sunday, a day prior to the two-week lockdown which comes into effect from May 10. The lockdown follows 10 days of Corona Curfew | SHRIRAM BN

DK DIST HOME TO 50 CONTAINMENT ZONES

With a surge of Covid cases being reported from Dakshina Kannada district on a daily basis, the number of containment zones has been increased to over 50. According to the district health department report, most of the new cases are from Mangaluru City and Bantwal taluk. Given the situation, Mangaluru now has the most number of containment zones at 30, followed by Bantwal with 17. The task force members are motitoring these two zones.

NATIONWIDE	MAY 8	MAY 9
Fresh cases	4,01,078	4,03,738
Recoveries	3,18,609	3,86,444
Deaths	4,187	4,092

JAB-O-METER — TAKE YOUR SHOT

MAY 8 **18,93,258 doses**

MAY 9 **6,71,646 doses**

TOTAL: 17,01,53,432

KARNATAKA	MAY 8	MAY 9
Fresh cases	47,563	47,930
Recoveries	34,881	31,796
Deaths	482	490

Across the state

5,64,485 TOTAL ACTIVE CASES

32.71% POSITIVITY RATE

1,05,21,773 TOTAL VACCINATIONS ACHIEVED SO FAR

In Bengaluru, a Ward Decentralised Triage and Emergency Response (DETER) Committee has been formed in BBMP limits to curbs cases at the ward level

DOUBLE WHAMMY

PRESENT TENSE FOR BHOPAL TWINS

ANURAAG SINGH @ Bhopal

IN a dilapidated double storey house in Budhwara, a thickly populated lower middle class area of Old Bhopal, twin girls aged five suddenly start wailing and ask for their parents. "Where is our papa and mummy, when will they return, have they gone to God?" they ask.

Family members immediately rush in, consoling the twins that things will be fine and their parents are likely to return soon. But return they will not as Mohan and Rita Barve, the girl's parents, fell prey to Covid-19 in quick succession.

"We have to lie to my nieces everyday when they ask us about their parents. I don't know how long we will able to hide the truth that their parents will never return," said Mankesh Raikwar, the twins' maternal uncle who has taken the responsibility of taking care of the girls. "Along with their parents, they had also tested Covid positive, but they are fine now," he added.

Mohan, 42, was an electrician with a semi-government herbal products plant in Bhopal's Barkheda Pathani area. Sometime last month he started getting fever, but instead of getting himself tested for Covid, he continued to take medicines from a personal doctor.

His condition suddenly worsened on April 28 and he had shortness of breath. Raikwar rushed him to the state government-run Hamidia Hospital, where he was put on oxygen support. But two days later despite the best efforts of doctors, Mohan succumbed to the infection.

By the time Mohan was hospitalised, his wife Rita and the twin daughters, too, had tested positive. Five days later on May 3, Rita, who was being treated in isolation at her parents' old home, also died. "I had gone to immerse Mohan's ashes in the river Narmada in the neighbouring Hoshangabad district on May 3. While returning home I got a call that my sister Rita had also passed away," said Raikwar.

But the future is tense for Raikwar's family of four and the twins as they are living on borrowed money. An auto-rickshaw driver, Raikwar has not earned a penny in the past 15 days owing to the lockdown.

"I have already borrowed ₹40,000 and will have to borrow more to take care of four kids now. My two other sisters, who live in Bhopal and Burhanpur, are willing to take care of the twin nieces, but my 75-year-old mother doesn't want to leave her granddaughters," he said. "Neither my sister nor my brother-in-law would have ever thought they would depart from this world in a matter of days. But we will take care of their daughters as long as we can." Raikwar added.

The twins are not the only children who have been orphaned in the current Covid surge. More cases of both parents dying of Covid are surfacing, leaving behind dependent children. There are anecdotal reports of some of them even being abandoned and left to fend for themselves.

CONTINUED ON: P7

COVID'S ORPHANS — PART-I

NCPCR seized of the matter

On May 2, National Commission for Protection of Child Rights drew the attention of all states to children orphaned due to Covid-19, saying those abandoned or in need of care must be produced before Child Welfare Committees

Worry as Covid kills many among AMU faculty

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

THE deaths of at least 16 serving and 18 retired teachers, besides other staff of the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), due to Covid-19 in the past 18 days have triggered an alarm, with the Vice-Chancellor on Sunday urging the ICMR to study the infection variant on the campus.

In a letter to the ICMR, Vice-Chancellor Tariq Mansoor said "a particular variant may be circulating in areas around the AMU campus and surrounding localities, which has led to these deaths". The latest to fall to the virus was the dean of the AMU's law faculty, Prof Shakeel Samdani, who died at Aligarh's Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College on Friday.

Mansoor said the microbiology lab at the Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College would send samples to the Institute of Genomic and Integrated Biology, New Delhi, for genome sequencing of the variants detected in the town. Meanwhile, the medical college Principal Shahid Ali Siddiqui told media that 25 doctors at the hospital had tested positive for the infection in the past fortnight.

According to the V-C, three doctors were under treatment, while others had recovered. Meanwhile, the college principal claimed the hospital was battling oxygen shortage and was dependent on its three plants. The hospital has not received a single oxygen cylinder from outside in the past 12 days despite continuous efforts, he said. CONTINUED ON: P8

20 more deaths in 24 hours at Ch'nagar hospital

K SHIVA KUMAR @ Mysuru

IN yet another shocker, the Chamarajanagar District Government Hospital, which has come under intense scrutiny after 24 people died due to shortage of oxygen recently, recorded 20 more deaths in a span of 24 hours. Of them, 15 died during the day on Sunday alone. These include 15 Covid-19 patients who succumbed to the disease, and five non-Covid patients who had comorbidities.

With the State Government already ordering an inquiry by a retired judge, and the Karnataka Lokayukta launching a separate probe into the deaths of 24 people, both the hospital authorities and the district administration are tight-lipped.

On Sunday, Chamarajanagar district registered 930 new Covid-19 cases while 561 patients were discharged. The district has 4,748 active cases. Sources pointed out that of the total tests being conducted, about 36 per cent of samples are testing positive, indicating a rapid spread of the coronavirus in rural areas. On Sunday, 2,553 tests were conducted of which a majority of samples from villages turned positive. The virus spread and the increasing number of deaths in recent days has created panic among the people.

Surprisingly, two villagers tested positive in the remote Padasulanatha and Nagamalai hamlets atop Male Mahadeshwara Hills, which have no transportation facilities or contact with outsiders. This has sent shocks waves among the tribal community in the region. P5

HOME CONFUSION

Over 1.5 crore houses fall outside village maps, remain illegal

BANSY KALAPPA @ Bengaluru

WHILE villages and towns are pushing borders and growing extensions, administration and governance still depends on old village maps, many dating back to the early Independence era.

This anomaly has resulted in about 1.2 crore legitimate properties lying within the legal village and gramathana boundaries, but about 1.5 crore houses and residential units falling outside the "legitimate boundaries" of villages. With residents using all amenities like village roads, water and power, the onus is on the administration to bring this humongous number of properties on to legitimate maps, and give them legal recognition.

The Svamitwa Scheme, recently inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has been formulated to address these issues. While Union Government authorities have said that panchayats will receive money and support to implement this scheme, experts say they have not addressed the practical challenges of the issue.

The anomaly has resulted in about 1.2 crore legitimate properties lying within legal village boundaries, but 1.5 crore houses falling outside the boundaries | FILE

Most of these new properties are given ad hoc papers and identities, and survive on documents like 'Form 10', and need to be regularised, say officials in the survey department.

"Every 15-20 years, the number of houses in villages almost doubles, as children move out and build their own homes. This phenomena is seen in rural and urban areas. Yet, over the past 70 years, most town and village maps have not been redrawn to legitimise the 'illegal' houses in these extensions. Technically, they fall outside the town or village," say survey department experts. Most survey maps show that houses in extensions often outnumber the legitimate houses within the legal village or town boundaries.

This issue was taken up by the State government with the Union Government last September, but the Centre failed to comprehensively address it, say officials. "The Union government only said they would give legal papers to those within the map boundaries, but failed to address the issue of new houses in extensions. The Centre said State governments must take up the issue," said an official. P5

Helping people through the healthcare maze

MUKESH RANJAN @ Ranchi

IT was the call of humanity that prodded businessman Babu Khan (36) to reach out to Covid patients swarming the Sadar Hospital at Hazaribagh here, desperately looking for hospital and medical assistance. He found them in panic as they did not know how to get hospital beds or an oxygen cylinder or how to approach a doctor in case of an emergency, and decided to offer help.

Twenty-two days and 175 cured patients later, Babu continues his selfless service, even giving up the warmth and comfort of his family during the holy month of Ramzan.

"I assist the needy in all ways possible. From getting beds to securing oxygen to arranging free medicine for the needy, I do everything in my power," Babu said. His day begins at 11.30 am, and he helps people landing at the hospital till 5.30 pm, after which he goes to a nearby flat where he has been staying for the past 20 days to break Roza. He returns around 7.30 pm and continues with his work till 3 am when he goes back for Sehri.

Babu Khan at Hazaribagh Sadar Hospital

Babu, who has put his business on hold, said he has not seen his wife and three children since the last 22 days ago. "They are worried for me. I keep in touch via video calls," he said. What about his own safety? Babu said he takes abundant care. "I wear gloves, masks and take a bath before entering my flat. I sanitise myself regularly, too," he said.

Babu's service came in for praise from hospital Superintendent Dr Vinod Kumar, who said: "He does not hesitate to call us over phone in case of emergency."

EXPRESS READ

Sculptor Raghunath Mohapatra dies at 78

Bhubaneswar: Rajya Sabha MP Raghunath Mohapatra, who is also one of the leading stone sculptors of India, breathed his last on Sunday at AIIMS-Bhubaneswar, days after he tested positive for Covid-19, an official at the hospital said.

Chinese rocket debris crashes into ocean

Beijing: The remnants of China's biggest rocket crashed into the Indian Ocean on Sunday with no reports of damage. Beijing was slammed by NASA for failure to meet standards about space debris.

US Navy seizes arms likely bound for Yemen

Dubai: The US Navy announced that it seized an arms shipment of assault weapons, machines guns and sniper rifles hidden aboard a ship in the Arabian Sea, apparently bound for Yemen to support the country's Houthi rebels.

WITH THIS ISSUE
THE ESSENTIAL CAMPUS DIGEST edex
32 PAGES, INCLUDING 16 OF edex (TABLOID), 4 OF CITY EXPRESS

ALMANAC TODAY

- **Monday :** 10/05/2021
- **Year:** Plava
- **Ayana:** Uttharayana
- **Ritu:** Vasantha
- **Masa:** Chaitra
- **Paksha:** Krishna
- **Tithi:** Chaturdashi 9.05 pm
- **Nakshatra:** Ashwini 7.55 pm
- **Moon in** Vrishabha Rashi
- **Rahukaala:** 07:30 am to 09:00 am
- **Gulikakala:** 01:30 pm to 03:00 pm
- **Yamaganda:** 10:30 am to 12:00 pm

WEATHER

MIN 24°C | MAX 32°C

FORECAST
Light showers. Cloudy

Sunrise	5.55 am
Sunset	6.36 pm
Moonrise	4.56 am
Moonset	5.34 pm

FOR SECOND DOSE

Vax crunch: Elders forced to go to pvt hosps

Don't mind paying Rs 600-850 for a jab, say the aged, cite shortage at primary health centres

MEERA BHARDWAJ @ Bengaluru

OF the 1.05 crore people who received the Covid-19 vaccine in the state till May 9, only 9.77 lakh senior citizens have received both doses, while 35.90 lakh have got the first dose. Despite the restrictions, many senior citizens in the city have been going from hospital to hospital before finally receiving their second dose in private hospitals.

They said they don't mind paying Rs 600-Rs 850 for the second dose as there are a limited number of free vaccines available at primary health centres (PHCs) which get only 5-10 vials each day.

Senior citizens have complained that they had to visit dozens of hospitals or vaccination centres to get a jab. However, many of them managed to get their second shot within the stipulated time.

There are more than 140 Primary Health Centress in and around Bengaluru.

At Uttarahalli PHC, till recently, about 100 people were being vaccinated daily. It is only in the past three days that the numbers have dropped. Another 100 people are being vaccinated at a camp in a government school nearby. H Anilesh, secretary, Poorna Prajna Resident Welfare Association, said, "At the Primary Health Centre, the first preference is senior citizens due for second dose. Then the elderly who need to get their first dose, and then those in the 45-59 age group. I got my first dose on March 17 and second on April 27. I feel that in the coming days, the situation will improve and more people can be vaccinated through special camps in residential colonies."

Vishwanath, a resident of Yelahanka-Doddaballapura Road, said it was very easy to get both doses at a PHC nearby. "Some 80-100 people get vaccinated daily and it was so easy I didn't even try at a private hospital."

In BSK II Stage, social worker Ramesh (name changed) took his first dose in March at Kidney Foundation, and got his second dose at Apollo Hospital in Jayanagar. The first time he had paid Rs 250, while for the second dose of Covishield, he was charged Rs 850.

When *The New Indian Express* spoke to many citizens, they said, "We don't mind paying Rs 600 to Rs 800 for the vaccination in private hospitals. Those who can afford it should go to private hospitals and leave the PHCs for the poor."

Searching and calling up hospitals has yielded results for many. A family of five senior citizens, who easily got the first Covishield dose on March 13 at Yogananda Hospital in Padmanabha Nagar, had to look around a bit for their second dose. They landed in BGS Hospital where Covaxin doses were available. With information coming in about the availability of Covishield at BGS Medical College, they got their second dose on April 26, and were charged Rs 250 per dose.

BBMP health officials, however, said, "We are supplying about 5-10 vials to PHCs and in the coming days, the situation will improve."

Vax-imum coverage (People above the age of 60)

DATE	1ST DOSE	2ND DOSE
May 9	5,725	26,865
May 8	3,429	39,997
May 7	3,639	23,099
May 6	1,834	7,550
May 5	11,099	39,857
May 3	7,097	16,361
May 2	3,145	5,100

We do not mind paying Rs 600 to Rs 800 for vaccination in private hospitals. Those who can afford it should go to private hospitals and leave the Primary Health Centress for the poor

A resident

Tracking status of beds in private hospitals now just a click away

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

AMID the spiralling Covid-19 cases in the city, the Private Hospitals and Nursing Home Association (PHANA) on Sunday launched a web portal — searchmybed — to provide real-time status on the availability of beds in private hospitals. The portal will also show the status of regular, ICU and oxygen beds.

PHNA president Dr Prasanna H M said that it was heartbreaking to see people running around in search of hospital beds. " People should get oxygen, beds and medicines. We should not get the dubious distinction of not giving adequate treatment to people. There is a huge demand for ICU beds and only one out of 50 people are getting it. It is a shame on our part. This portal is transparent. Using it, patients and NGOs can learn the status of beds as soon as they fall vacant," Dr Prasanna said.

This portal is open-ended and transparent. Using it, patients and NGOs can learn the status of hospital beds as soon as they fall vacant

Dr Prasanna H M, president, Private Hospitals and Nursing Home Association

BBMP Chief Commissioner Gaurav Gupta said that KPME and SAST portals weren't displaying the correct status of beds and hence they asked PHANA to come up with a solution. He said there is a need to increase ICU beds by 300-500 and oxygen beds by 2,000.

Bengaluru South MP Tejasvi Surya said that the portal should not be static and should be regularly updated.

Presently, in private quote, there are 613 regular beds, 763 oxygen beds, 152 ICU beds, and 90 ICU beds with a ventilator.

Health and Medical Education Minister Sudhakar urged PHANA to extend the portal to all districts once it stabilises and keep it functional even after the pandemic.

BBMP adopts Mumbai model to fight Covid, sets up ward panels

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

IN a bid to effectively manage Covid-19 at ward level, a Ward Decentralised Triage and Emergency Response (DETER) Committee for Covid-19 Management has been formed within BBMP limits.

A virtual meeting regarding the committee was held by Forest Minister Arvind Limbavali on Sunday, where it was decided that officials in each ward must work with RWAs, organisations, students, and volunteers, and set up a ward control room, triage centre, and micro-Covid Care Centre (CCCs) to respond quickly to the patients' concerns.

Lists of small hospitals, dental colleges and students must be prepared and teams must be formed to assign responsibilities of Covid management.

"Measures are being taken to curb the virus on the lines of Mumbai and Chennai. Not every Covid-infected person needs to be hospitalised. Those with no separate facility to self-isolate can get treated at CCCs. Along with this, triaging centres will be formed at the ward-level to treat those in home isolation," Limbavali said.

Principal Secretary, Revenue Department, N Manjunatha Prasad, said ward-level committees are formed in all 198 wards."Nodal officers, doctors, staff, ANM and ASHA workers will be working at the 141 PHCs. Testing and vaccination will take place at these PHCs. In addition, a control room and triaging centre will be established in all the wards. The Department of Health and Medical Education will appoint the staff needed for the triaging centre which will operate 24 hours," Prasad said.

He said they will provide home isolation kits to the infected, send them to CCCs/stabilisation centres and hospitals whenever treatment is required.

TO STOP THE VIRUS

A road in Chickpet is barricaded using construction trolleys to prevent entry of vehicles ahead of the 14-day Covid lockdown that begins today | SHRIRAM BN

EXPRESS READ

DSI plans online pre-board classes for PU II students

The Dayananda Sagar Institutions (DSI) will offer free online pre-board classes for PU II students ahead of the 2021 board exams in the wake of Covid-19. The sessions will cover Science (Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Mathematics) and Commerce (Computer Science, Accountancy, Basic Maths, Business Studies, Economics, and Statistics). The sessions will be held from May 10 to May 31. For more details, visit the website www.dayanandasagar.edu.

Metro airport line tender delayed, thanks to lockdown

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE much-awaited KR Puram-KIA Metro line via Hebbal is set to get further delayed owing to the prevailing Covid-19 pandemic. Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL), which was set to finalise the tenders for this Reach 2B line by next week, has now extended it by one more month. The new deadline would be June 14.

The Centre had given its clearance for the 38.44 km line with 17 stations airport line on April 20 and the contract was to be awarded by May 15. The line is set to come up at a cost of Rs 14,788 crore with a completion period of five years.

BMRCL MD Rakesh Singh said the delay became inevitable since many documents require physical submission, which was not possible now. "Due to lockdown, many bidders requested for extension of tenders submission."

The contract for completing balance works in the terminated contract for Reach 6E has been extended from May 21 to June 21. The contract involves construction of viaduct from Jyothipuram Station to KIA terminals and 15 elevated stations. Road widening and utility diversions are a part of it.

Singh also inspected ongoing works at the Jayadeva Interchange Metro Station. "There were delays at a few places. So, I was trying to understand the matter. We also had to sort out some land acquisition issues with Nandi Infrastructure Corridor Enterprises and so had to meet their representatives," he said.

A senior BMRCL official told *TNIE* that the issue pertained to 2,000 sqm that Metro wanted for its Electronics City (1) Station and a viaduct on the R V Road-Bommasandra Line. "The High Court has asked NICE to hand over the land to Karnataka Industrial and Development Board by May 13. It has also asked the Special Land Acquisition Officer to fix the compensation that can be paid for the land," the official said.

Daily Starscope

PETER VIDAL

10th May: Monday's child is fair of face - or so runs the old nursery rhyme. I wonder if you know it? I looked in one of my old astrology books and I read that people born under the Moon - which rules Monday - are supposed to have large, round, glowing faces, just like the Full Moon. That should make them easy to spot!

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr. 20)
Any tension in your partnerships could be a dynamic force for change over the coming weeks. This is a time to mix as widely as possible and soak up influences you'd normally shun. You're also likely to make big advances in your business plans.

TAURUS (Apr. 21 - May 21)
Your romantic stars are powerful and growing more so by the day, but partners may have the edge when it comes to a battle of wills. You may soon be obliged to accept an unhelpful situation as a fait accompli. Wait till next week for the tables to turn.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
Preoccupation with financial affairs looks certain to recur on several occasions next year, so the more attention you pay to any irregularities now, the less time you'll need to devote to them later on. Fortunately, today's support from the Moon eases the way at home.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
This is the week to complete all tasks before you can embark on the next stage of your plans. Something unclear about home arrangements may cause you to rearrange your schedule, but with Venus and Mars both offering you unqualified support you are on safe ground.

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23)
You'll press ahead with domestic improvements, allowing time for other obligations. Family relationships will benefit from the same care you apply to your own special interests, although a domestic mystery is still provoking niggling suspicions.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23)
The planetary accent is on pleasure over the coming days, and the best way to personal fulfilment is through devoting extra time to your creative Virgo an skills. Ideally, you should now be on holiday rather than at work. Also, if you get a chance, turn the clock back.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23)
Try thinking if all your recent actions have been for the best. In general you're heading in the right direction, but a little extra care now will prevent difficulties in the future. You are bound to feel put upon, but perhaps the message is to stand up for yourself next time!

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22)
By now Mercury is sufficiently entrenched in your house of dreams and brought the hope of financial improvements. It's up to you to create the right conditions for success. A domestic revolution will soon be considered - but postponed.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 22)
The obstacles which blocked your progress in the past should have been firmly dealt with some time ago. If you are still subject to unfair delays, it's possible you're doing something wrong. Do yourself a favour and learn new skills, including extra social graces.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 23 - Jan. 20)
The high pressure of recent weeks is easing. You can look back on your achievements with pride. Even if there's been little tangible gain, you've grown in wisdom and experience. You could make a financial killing today, but only if the rules are changed.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19)
Today's events are a chance to prove your worth on hard work. Don't shirk responsibility and prove all those who accuse you of being lazy and self-interested as completely wrong. By mid week you will have seized the moral high ground, much to partners' annoyance.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar 20)
Another helpful astrological line-up creates opportunities - domestic, social or professional. You must make the right moves to complete the picture. You're still keeping a secret, and there is no reason why you shouldn't continue to do so for as long as you like.

THE PHANTOM

NOBODY ELSE WEARS THE GLASSES! WE CAN'T HAVE BEACH BLANKET BINGO AROUND HERE!
"TOWNS ELLERBEE"! HAH!
HE WAS JOHN K! JUNGLE PATROL ALL THE WAY!
Falk
4/11/2015, ED.

HI AND LOIS

BEETLE BAILEY

DON'T KEEP AGREEING WITH ME. IT DOESN'T HELP UNLESS YOU TELL ME HONESTLY WHAT YOU THINK!
NOBODY WANTS A YES MAN!!
RIGHT, SIR
THERE YOU GO AGAIN!!
GREG + MORT WALKER

BLONDIE

LOCKHORNS

"LEROY HAS ALWAYS HAD A HARD TIME LETTING GO OF HIS THINGS."

DENNIS THE MENACE

"SCOTCH TERRIER? I THOUGHT THAT WAS WHAT COWBOYS DRANK WHEN THEY'RE THIRSTY!"

SUDOKU

Hard: Test your number crunching skill with our unique puzzle

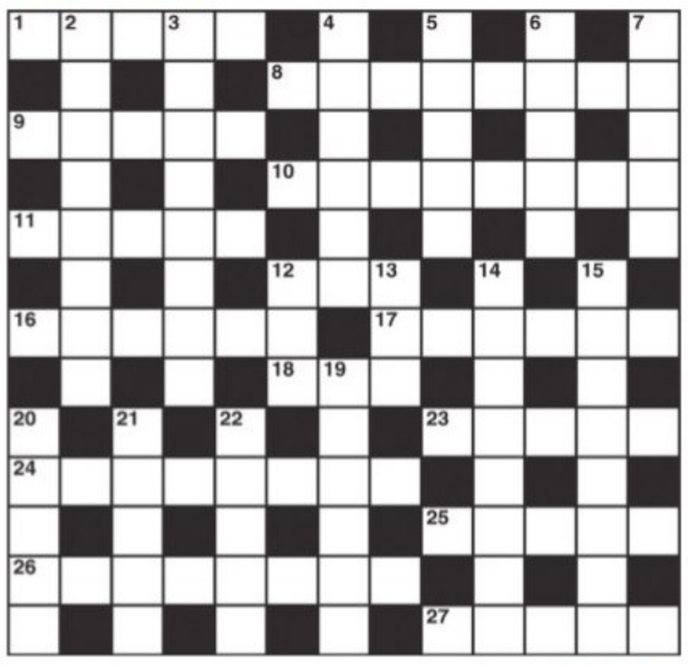
Fill in the grid with digits in such a manner that every row, every column and every 3X3 box accommodates the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.

				1		3	6	
			2					1
3		6	8		4	7		
					9	4		
	7		5		2		3	
		8	3					
		9	4		6	5		2
6					5			
	4	5		9				

Solutions to Saturday's puzzle

1	5	9	4	8	2	3	6	7
8	2	3	6	5	7	4	1	9
7	4	6	3	1	9	5	2	8
3	7	5	2	4	1	9	8	6
6	8	4	9	7	5	2	3	1
2	9	1	8	6	3	7	4	5
9	1	8	5	2	4	6	7	3
5	6	2	7	3	8	1	9	4
4	3	7	1	9	6	8	5	2

CROSS WORD



ACROSS

1 Sharp reminder of the church's status (5)
8 The boss controls the speed of the engine (8)
9 A series of records maybe (5)
10 Drink for a bird-dog (8)
11 It dies at the end of three months (5)
12 A washer may need it and vice versa (3)
16 Stop and have a drink (6)
17 Authorise one to catch a wriggling fish outside (6)
18 A work unit (3)
23 Applauds one hundred circuits (5)
24 The rest of the players (4,4)
25 With nothing coming in it's difficult to save (5)
26 A place to get a job (8)
27 Checks the organ controls (5)

DOWN

2 Compiles rambling verbal attacks (8)
3 Gambling game permitted in the course of a journey (8)
4 Glowing cigar (6)
5 Cheers up with fringe benefits (5)
6 Go surreptitiously like a rattle snake (5)
7 Exercise to get through (5)
12 An article in leather (3)
13 A girl to hang on to? (3)
14 Its main purpose was to convey information (4,4)
15 Empty words designed to capture applause? (8)
19 It was used to press home a charge (6)
20 Form heaps perhaps (5)
21 It's near the end (5)
22 Speak for the whole people (5)

SATURDAY'S SOLUTIONS

Across: 1 Understudy, 6 Atom, 10 Llama, 11 Tragedian, 12 Instance, 13 Regal, 15 Insects, 17 Topiary, 19 Kashmir, 21 Bittern, 22 Radio, 24 Pyramids, 27 Expensive, 28 Teeth, 29 Late, 30 Celebrated.

Down: 1 Ugly, 2 Diagnosis, 3 React, 4 Tetanus, 5 Dialect, 7 Thing, 8 Minelaying, 9 Decrepit, 14 Tinker Bell, 16 Compound, 18 Amendment, 20 Reptile, 21 Burmese, 23 Depot, 25 Mater, 26 Shed.

JUMBLE By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

NUDMO

RNWOS

TASEWY

LLWIWO

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I'm glad we know the storm was coming.
We have more coming tonight.
3/12
THEY PREDICTED A VERY STRONG WINTER STORM, SO THE TOTAL ACCUMULATION ---

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon

ANSWERS TOMORROW

SATURDAY'S: **Jumbles:** HOMER DOUBT FORGET SPHINX
ANSWER: They only wanted the guppies from the tank, so the store's employee — FISHED THE MOUT

An oxygen-generating plant that was sanctioned to the General Hospital at KGF has been shifted to Tumakuru in a last-minute decision by the government, raising many eyebrows. Officials in KGF had completed all the preliminary work to install the plant when they were told that it had been shifted to Tumakuru

People queue up to buy essentials ahead of the lockdown, in Bengaluru on Sunday | ASHISHKRISHNA HP

Need to buy groceries, medicine? Take a walk

Those with pre-booked appointments, SMS confirmation can go for vaccination

Bengaluru: With the state gearing up to face another 14-day partial lockdown starting Monday, the state government on Sunday evening issued fresh amendments to the orders. While the previous order had allowed movement of people to get Covid-19 vaccination, the new order has now been amended to allow only those with pre-booked slots and an SMS confirmation. This essentially means that movement of vehicles will not be allowed for walk-in vaccinations starting Monday. Patients and their caretakers, in case of emergencies, will be allowed to commute by vehicles. Movement for testing will be allowed with minimal proof, the order said without specifying what can qualify as proof. The addendum also states that defense PSUs, banks, RBI, insurance offices etc will be allowed to function at 50 per cent capacity. No such cap was placed in the earlier order. An amendment has been made for e-commerce deliveries as well. While the earlier guidelines allowed e-commerce deliveries, the addendum allows delivery of only essentials items via e-commerce.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

WHETHER you are going to your neighbourhood shops to buy groceries or the nearest drinking water dispenser plant to pick up a can of water, leave your vehicles behind from Monday onwards for 14 days.

As part of the 14-day partial lockdown announced in Karnataka, vehicles are prohibited to ply and police have been given the authority to seize vehicles plying on roads.

Vehicles will be allowed only in case of a medical emergency or to commute to hospitals or healthcare centres for vaccination but with proof.

Right from Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa, DG & IGP of police Praveen Sood to City Police Commissioner Kamal Pant, all have appealed to citizens to not venture out.

"Pl take lockdown seriously in the overall interest of everyone's safety.... or be ready to get your vehicle seized for next two weeks. Choice is yours (sic)," said a tweet from the Karnataka DG's official Twitter handle on Sunday.

Police in various places have already started cracking down on commuters every day. "Details of the vehicles seized for violation of #COVID19 guidelines: As of May 9: from 10 AM to 8 PM 2-wheelers: 1984 3-wheelers: 99 4-wheelers: 144 Total - 2227 --------- Cases booked under NDMA: 23 (sic)," tweeted the city police commissioner.

For the next 14-days the government has put in place stringent measures to curb the movement of people.

While in the original order, the cap on the number of people at weddings was 50, in an addendum released on Saturday evening, the state government said the cap was 40 for weddings. A total of 40 passes will be issued for weddings by the zonal BBMP officials or tahsildar.

Only those people who have these passes will be allowed to commute.

These measures come at a time when Karnataka is consistently seeing a massive increase in the number of Covid-19 cases.

Mysuru DC now dives into pool controversy

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Mysuru

WHILE the state is reeling under a severe pandemic and a massive financial crunch around it, Mysuru Deputy Commissioner Rohini Sindhuri has constructed a swimming pool and personal gym at her official residence premises, which is a heritage building, inviting much criticism. The construction includes a swimming pool with a smaller pool for kids as well as a hi-tech gym with an enclosure. However, the officer has maintained that it was only renovated four months ago.

The issue, which was rised by a JD(S) leader, has raised many eyebrows at a time when the district is seeing a sharp spike in cases and double-digit fatalities every day and the DC herself is being blamed for delay in dispatching oxygen cylinders to Chamarajanagara district where oxygen shortage killed nearly 24 patients.

Speaking to media persons here, JD(S) leader and former city councillor K V Mallesh claimed that the DC spent at least Rs 50 lakh on the swimming pool and gym. "She should clarify which funds were used to build it. If it's not government funds, she should explain the source," he insisted.

He also added that DC's official residence is a heritage structure and such construction and redevelopments requires special permission and consultation from experts. "She herself is the chairman of the heritage cell for the city, and it is unacceptable to see her violate rules," he said. "This is unnecessary at a time when the pandemic is raging and there is a clamor for augmenting medical facilities. Also, in Mysuru, payouts for farmers including flood relief are pending citing lack of funds. The administration could have at least purchased medicines or ventilators with these funds," he said.

The building housing the swimming pool and high-tech gym on the premises of DCs official residence | EXPRESS

Mallesh also revealed that he had raised the matter through a letter to district in-charge minister S T Somashekhar, but there has been no response. "Even the Chief Secretary is not entitled to create such facilities," he claimed. "If she fails to justify the construction amidst these troubling times, we will knock on the doors of the governor and file a case against her against her," he added.

On her part, Rohini Sindhuri said that an old pool existed on the campus of the Deputy Commissioner's bunglow. Since it was not maintained, it was full of mosquitos, forcing her to got it renovated and maintained four month ago. She alleged that Mallesh was making baseless charges defame her when she has been working round the clock to manage Covid following a spike in cases, creating more oxygenated beds and ventilators. She charged that the allegations against her by the JD(S) former corporator was a political conspiracy to mislead the public.

LOCKDOWN LAW

COPS CANE MOTORISTS FOR FLOUTING NORMS

BENGALURU: Police seized 2,227 vehicles, including 1,984 two-wheelers, 99 autorickshaws and 144 four-wheelers for violating lockdown norms and traveling on roads unnecessarily. The police also booked 23 cases against the owners of various shops and commercial establishments under the Disaster Management Act on Sunday. Some motorists, who were caught by police, were caned forcing them to run away, leaving their vehicles behind. Some were made to sit on the road and given a pep talk on the lockdown. A senior police officer said that the actual strict lockdown would start from Monday. He added that it would be a zero-tolerance lockdown this time around. **ENS**

You need confidence to beat coronavirus, we can't save you, says Umesh Katti

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bagalkot

MINISTER for Food and Civil Supplies Umesh Katti did it again -- this time his remark was about Covid-19 patients, who he said cannot not be saved if they have "low confidence levels in fighting the coronavirus".

After chairing the Covid-19 review meeting with Bilagi taluk officials, Katti told reporters, "People will continue to die for various reasons, even if you give six injections of Remdesivir vials people will die. We are helpless with patients who have zero confidence in fighting the coronavirus."

Katti continued with his argument, "We cannot boost the confidence of such people and save them from the virus. Because of such people, the death rate of Covid-19 is surging," applying his own logic for the high mortality rate in Karnataka. At a time when people's morale is running low, with death on one side and disease and hospital stays on another, leaders like Katti are continuing to show their insensitivity. Katti, who is also Bagalkot district minister, added, "People need to have confidence and I will pray to the Almighty to save the lives of people."

Civil Supplies Minister Umesh Katti flags off ambulances donated by Mines and Geology Minister Murugesh Nirani | EXPRESS

This comes on the back of another such statement at a Covid-19 meeting with private doctors at Rabkavi Banahatti. "The third wave of Covid-19 will come in future. I don't know whether you people will survive or not but I have to live," he had said, setting off laughter and also comments on his imprudence.

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Raids against hoarders of O_2: Officials

ENS @Bengaluru

THERE is a serious shortage of oxygen and one of the reasons for this is people hoarding limited supplies of oxygen cylinders at their homes. The State Government is now thinking of taking action against these hoarders for contributing to the shortage. "The hoarding should stop as it is making the situation worse," warned a senior government official.

Three senior officials of a high-level committee met on Saturday to discuss ways to deal with shortage of oxygen. They said that once all planned CCCs and other facilities become operational, they will start cracking down on those resorting to panic buying of cylinders.

Meanwhile, Mandya MP Sumalathha has been criticised for claiming that she was getting oxygen to the district by paying from her own pocket. They alleged that the MP had only redirected what was supplied by the State Government. But on Saturday evening, Sumalatha denied these charges and sent a photo of the cash bill to *TNIE*, showing that 56+2 oxygen cylinders had been bought from Padaki Air Products at Rs 23,000 per consignment.

XPRESS FOCUS

KISS with New Chancellor & Vice-Chancellor

Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) is the only university in the world exclusively for the tribal students. Founded by eminent educationist and social activist Dr. Achyuta Samanta, KISS is one of its kind fully-free and fully-residential institution, imparting education from KG to PG as well as doctoral programme to the tribal students. KISS, as a whole, is a home for 60000 tribal children (30000 existing and 30000 passed out students).

Eminent personalities from Odisha, who have brought pride to the State at national and international stage, have joined in different top positions as the Chancellor, Pro-Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Director General of KISS Deemed to be University.

Mr. Satya S. Tripathi, a former Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN), has taken over as the Chancellor of KISS Deemed to be University. Mr. Tripathi, who hails from Cuttack district of Odisha, has 40 years of rich and varied experience, which includes key positions in the UN around the world. He is also Secretary-General of the Global Alliance for a Sustainable Planet.

Dr. Upendra Tripathy, IAS (Retd.), who has served with the Govt. of India as the Secretary in the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, has joined as the Pro-Chancellor. Dr. Tripathy, who belongs to Ganjam district of Odisha, had also been the first Director-General of the International Solar Alliance, the first treaty-based International Organisation headquartered in India.

Prof. Deepak Kumar Behera, from Sambalpur district and an internationally acclaimed anthropologist, has taken charge as the Vice-Chancellor. Prior to joining KISS, he has served as the Vice-Chancellor of Sambalpur University, Berhampur University, and Rajendra University, Balangir. Prof. Behera has the distinction of being the only anthropologist in India to become the Vice-Chancellor of three different universities. He was a Fulbright Visiting Professor at California State University.

Prof. Pitabasa Sahoo, Dean, Department of Development Studies at Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development, Tamil Nadu has joined as the Pro-Vice Chancellor on deputation. Hailing from the Keonjhar district of Odisha, he has 20 years of research experience in the domain of Tribal Development, Regional Studies, Rural Development, Sustainable Development and Social Sector Development with agencies like UNDP, WFP, NORAD, Norwegian Aid, World Bank, DFID, etc.

Similarly, an IPS officer of Tamil Nadu cadre, Dr. Kanhu Charan Mahali has joined as the Director-General, KISS Deemed to be University after his retirement as Additional Director-General. A tribal from the Mayurbhanj district, he is an efficient administrator with over 34 years of experience in various capacities.

KISS Alumni Association, KISS Students' Association and KISS Adivasi Parents' Association have welcomed and congratulated them for joining such a world-class institution like KISS. They thanked Dr. Achyuta Samanta, Founder, KIIT & KISS who has been making continuous efforts to make KISS a top institute in the world. With the appointment of experienced senior administrators and academicians at the helm of affairs at KISS Deemed to be University, it would become a center of excellence in tribal studies shortly, they expressed confidence.

BOOK WORM JR

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS GROUP

BECOME AN AUTHOR THIS SUMMER!

Have a great story in mind? Well, all you have to do is send it to us and you could become a published author during the course of the Summer - through TNIE's Summer Stories Contest. Happy writing!

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS
SUMMER STORIES CONTEST

- Open to children aged 15 and under
- Entries should be 2000 words or less. Additional illustrations are welcome
- Students must mention their name, school, city, grade and attach a recent photograph

Send your stories to: bookwormjr.edex@gmail.com
Entries open till May 23, 2021

TRACKING COVID-19

SPEED AND RISE OF COVID-19 CASES IN KARNATAKA

47,930 CASES REPORTED TODAY

47,563 CASES REPORTED YESTERDAY

TALLY STANDS AT

TODAY 19,34,378

YESTERDAY 18,86,448

DEATHS

TODAY 490 | YESTERDAY 482

DISCHARGES

TODAY 31,796 | YESTERDAY 34,881

ACTIVE CASES

TODAY 5,64,485

YESTERDAY 5,48,841

POSITIVITY RATE

TODAY 7.15

YESTERDAY 7.02

MORTALITY RATE

TODAY 0.97

YESTERDAY 0.96

RECOVERY RATE

TODAY 69.84

YESTERDAY 69.93

The first Covid-19 case in Karnataka was reported on March 8, 2020. Since then until May 9, 2021, a total of 19,34,378 cases have been reported in 1 year and 61 days...

1,05,21,773 Number of people vaccinated across the state

VACCINATION DRIVE STATUS

Health care workers 1st dose	6,91,102
Health care workers 2nd dose	4,47,584
Frontline workers 1st dose	4,60,941
Frontline workers 2nd dose	1,78,086
Age 18-45 1st dose	10,627
Age 45-60 1st dose	37,22,263
Age 45-60 2nd dose	4,42,409
Above 60 1st dose	35,90,825
Above 60 2nd dose	9,77,936

DISTRICT-WISE COVID CASES LAST 24 HOURS

20,897 BENGALURU URBAN

1,066 BENGALURU RURAL

Bagalakote: 1,315	Chamarajanagara: 930	Dakshina Kannada: 1,694	Hassan: 2,349	Kolar: 424	Raichuru: 702	Udupi: 962
Ballari: 2,141	Chikkaballapura: 657	Davanagere: 453	Haveri: 370	Koppala: 291	Ramanagara: 604	Uttara Kannada: 917
Belagavi: 613	Chikkamagaluru: 582	Dharwad: 777	Kalaburagi: 1,062	Mandya: 1,959	Shivamogga: 650	Vijayapura: 597
Bidar: 313	Chitradurga: 111	Gadag: 368	Kodagu: 576	Mysuru: 1,854	Tumakuru: 2,001	Yadagir: 695

AS 2ND WAVE CRASHES IN, STATE SHATTERED

From Shivamogga to Kolar and from Kodagu to Bengaluru, the official machinery is struggling to cope with the onslaught brought by the pandemic

Kodagu crematorium cries for revamp as toll rises

PRAJNA GR @MADIKERI

"WHEN we started this service a year ago, we did not know it would become so severe. We are stressed and emotionally drained. But we cannot abandon it now," said a volunteer from the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, which is involved in conducting the last rites of Covid victims in Kodagu.

It was among the first districts to report Covid cases and had sought the help of volunteers, especially for the cremation and burial of Covid victims. Over 100 volunteers came forward from Popular Front of India, Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Bajrang Dal and Seva Bharathi. While the district rarely reported Covid deaths last year, it is seeing an average of six deaths per day over the last one month, the highest being 16 on a single day.

The designated crematorium for Covid victims in Madikeri is equipped to raise only three pyres at a time. "We can arrange two pyres on the cemented structure and the third on the temporary setup that has been arranged with the increase in Covid deaths," a volunteer said. "When there are more than three deaths, we have to wait for nearly three to four hours for all the three bodies to burn completely. We then collect the ashes and hand them over to relatives. We dispose of our PPE kits, sanitise ourselves and then go back to the Madikeri Covid Hospital to collect the remaining bodies. We repeat the same process. When there are more deaths, most of our day is spent at the crematorium," they added.

Volunteers of VHP and Bajrang Dal have conducted the last rites of 101 victims, and they do selfless service as they don't accept any monetary donations. "But I request the district administration to provide us with health insurance. If anything happens to us tomorrow, at least our families can survive with the insurance money. Social service alone has been a part of most of our lives. Also, if the government can expand and improve the crematorium, it would reduce a lot of our stress," a volunteer said.

A volunteer clears a funeral pyre at the designated crematorium in Madikeri

SIGN OF THE TIMES

Garment workers stitch PPE suits at a factory in Peenya near Bengaluru. With Karnataka witnessing a massive surge in Covid cases, production of personal safety gear has been increased to keep up with the soaring demand | ASHISHKRISHNA HP

Oxygen plant sanctioned to Kolar shifted to Tumkuru

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Kolar

AN oxygen-generating plant that was sanctioned to the General Hospital at KGF has been shifted to Tumakuru in a last-minute decision by the government raising many eyebrows. Officials at KGF had completed all the preliminary work to install the plant when they were told that it had been shifted to Tumakuru.

It was one of the two units sanctioned by the Central Government to the State -- one was to KGF and the other to HD Kote in Mysuru district.

Sources said that first, the district administration received orders from the State Government on the allotment of the plant, and Deputy Commissioner Dr Selvamani deputed two senior officials, including an engineer from the City Municipality, to arrange for the crane and other equipment to install the plant. KGF District Surgeon Dr Shiva Kumar too had identified the spot to install it. But by evening, the district administration received orders that it had been shifted to Tumakuru.

Kolar MP S Muniswamy said allotting the oxygen plant, which generates 500 litres of oxygen per minute, would have saved hundreds of lives at the 100-bed KGF General Hospital, he added.

Don't dial 1912, you could die waiting for a response

BANSY KALAPPA @Bengaluru:

THIRTY lines. 30 employees. 20,000+ calls per day. No wonder the Covid-19 helpline 1912 has been of little help to the distressed public of Bengaluru. Those who have tried and tested this emergency response line swear that it is almost always engaged, and if you do get your call in edgeways and get connected to your BBMP zone, you could wait forever for a response. Or your call could drop. 1912 is the most important number for those on a hospital bed hunt, but four weeks into the second wave with its sharp spurt of cases, the number of lines has fallen woefully short. It has also come to light that this has been the only number for information on everything from hospital accommodation, oxygen beds, ICU to ventilators, and it is only now that the calls are hived off to BBMP zones.

Swamped with calls, BBMP increased the number to 60 lines just ten days ago, and again added 50 more lines. It is now planning to increase the number of lines to 250 and hire call centre staffers to man them. As one angry Bengalurean questioned, "Did it need scores of people to die to wake up the system, why was it not done a month ago? Is Bengaluru Development portfolio not with the CM?"

N Raghavendra, a volunteer, declared the number "useless". "In two cases, this lethargy and delay has resulted in the death of patients. One was 45-year-old Srinath whose relatives dialled this number to get a bed when his oxygen saturation level was around 80, and got a call about 48 hours later from Victoria. Just 30 minutes after they admitted him, they got information that he had died. Another patient, 32-year-old Shabari needed a ventilator bed, but the call centre delayed a call back, and he passed away. How can this qualify as an emergency response service?"

In another case, call centre officials took details and called back 24 hours later. Dr Sunil, a private medical practitioner, told TNIE, "I dialled this number around 1.30am, seeking a bed for a seriously-ill patient, aged about 60. Three hospitals refused him and he got a bed after nine hours." There should have been about 100 lines from the beginning. These are signs of a flailing state," said retired IAS officer TR Raghunandan.

Advocate K V Dhananjay, who has been crusading against corruption, said, "Those who have suffered can sue the government. I will take it up as a legal issue. There are around 250 hospitals, and each hospital needs two numbers, so there should be 500 lines."

Did it need scores of people to die to wake up the system, why was it not done a month ago? Is Bengaluru Development portfolio not with the CM?

Bengaluru resident

No spare ventilator? Patient dies at McGann

Shivamogga: A Covid-19 patient died at McGann Hospital after he was allegedly not put on a ventilator on Saturday night. Following this, the deputy commissioner has ordered an inquiry. Relatives of Anand (46) from Shikaripura alleged that he was admitted and given oxygen, but was not taken to the ICU for ventilator support. However, Shimoga Institute of Medical Sciences medical superintendent Dr Sridhar S said that all available ventilators were occupied when the patient was brought to the hospital. "He was admitted at a hospital in Shikaripura and was brought to McGann. By that time, his SPo2 level was down to 40%. We were trying to arrange a ventilator as all the ventilators were occupied. But he died of cardiac arrest," he said. ENS

VENTILATORS FROM CHINA ARRIVE IN BENGALURU

Bengaluru : China has sent life-saving equipment like oxygen concentrators and ventilators to Bengaluru and the cargo was given clearance on priority at the Kempegowda International Airport on Sunday. According to a top official, "The Red Cross Society of China has donated 100 oxygen concentrators, 40 ventilators and five BPAP Systems, worth Rs 4.5 crore in total. The Indian Red Cross Society has imported them." The equipment will be donated to government hospitals in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. "The goods landed at the Kempegowda International Airport by a chartered flight on Sunday at 3 pm and clearance was given by the Customs within two hours. Terminal charges have also been waived," the official said. ENS

16 BBMP employees that Surya humiliated to be reinstated

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

THE 16 people, whose names MP Tejasvi Surya read out and who were termed terrorists by his uncle and MLA Ravi Subramanya on May 4, would be reinstated, but not at the south zone war room.

According to Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) officials, the 16 staffers would be posted at other places. They were called to the BBMP south zone war room on Saturday night and were told to sign a letter. "They did not let us read the letter, but it was read out aloud. It said, 'We have been hurt and severely affected by being accused as terrorists. However, in the wake of the financial crisis we would want to get back and work with the BBMP'," said one of the 16 affected employees, who were accused of being part of a bed booking scam.

Another employee said, "After we signed the letter, we were told that the agency that has contracted us and a BBMP manager will call us and tell us about our new assignments. But we have not been told anything so far. I heard that we would be posted to other places. Whether they call me back or not, my shift timings were 8 am to 4 pm. I will go at that time and see what is in store. I need the job, not just for the money, but for the service I wanted to do."

A senior BBMP official said, "The joint commissioner was handling the issue and we were kept out of this. It is said that these employees would be posted to assembly constituencies as data entry operators."

Members of Crystal Agency, which hires for the BBMP south zone war room, said, "The decision on posting these employees would be taken by the company owner. We were told to ensure that there is no staff crunch at the war room and to replace these 16 employees, which we did." Agency owner Vijay Kumar was not available for comments.

BBMP South Zone Commissioner Tulasi Maddineni said that some of the 16 employees had written to the Palike saying they had no other means of livelihood and they should be taken back. "They will be posted wherever the agency deploys them, ensuring that their jobs are safe. The requirement at the war room was filled by the agency."

BBMP Chief Commissioner Gaurav Gupta said that he cannot confirm whether the 16 employees were being reinstated as the decision was taken by the joint commissioner. "I am told that they made some representation. They were deployed by the agency and these are not government or BBMP employees. They were taken on contract basis," he said.

Despite repeated attempts, BBMP South Zone Joint Commissioner Veerabhadraswamy did not respond to calls.

HELP ON THE CALL

Trust, run by youth, launches helpline for patients

DIVYA CUTINHO @ Mangaluru

THE 'Akanksha Charitable Trust' in Dakshina Kannada district – started by young professor Dr Shreesha Bhat and that has 37 youngsters as members – has started a helpline to help Covid-positive patients.

The 'Akanksha Helpline', launched on Saturday, is managed by many students and faculty who are members of the trust. Shreesha told The New Indian Express that they have a team of doctors catering to mental health issues and general consultation related to Covid.

"We have two doctors for mental health and counselling of Covid patients and four doctors for general consultation. For academic counselling, there are around 15 faculty members, who help students worried about their future as schools and colleges have been shut for over a year now. Parents too can contact the helpline and they will be guided by experts," he said.

A volunteer of the Akanksha Charitable Trust at work | EXPRESS

HELPLINE NUMBERS

Sullia and Kadaba
9481711643, 8970213908

Belthangady and Moodbidri
9980146954, 9449758598

Bantwal and Puttur
9380886426, 8075669954

Mangaluru
7975447938, 9591625115

The trust has collected contact details of ambulances available in the district and also of different hospitals locally and in the district.

"Once we get a call on our helpline, we connect it to the person concerned. Our team of health professionals helps patients on the patient's nutrition too. We have a team to conduct online yoga sessions," Shreesha said, adding that they are waiting for permission from Deputy Commissioner Dr Rajendra K V to guide patients on the availability of beds. "If we get the permission, we will collect day-to-day data on bed availability and help Covid patients," he said.

Though the trust has teams in every taluk, including Mangaluru, they are focusing on rural areas. Jostom, a member of the helpline, said that it is like a Covid war room and people can contact them for any pandemic-related medical emergencies.

A family member of a Covid patient told *The New Indian Express* that he contacted the helpline on Saturday evening and they arranged an ambulance immediately.

Beds booked illegally in three hospitals

Bengaluru: The Central Crime Branch (CCB) investigating the alleged irregularities in bed allotment for Covid-19 patients have found that the beds were booked illegally in three private hospitals. A senior police officer said, "We are questioning hospital staff, Arogyamitra volunteers, and others in connection with this case. We will initiate legal action based on the findings of the investigation." Meanwhile, a case has been registered at Jeevan Bheema Nagar police station for booking a bed for Covid patients from other districts. ENS

Apollo Adulux Hospital, Kochi, became the first private hospital to start the vaccination of those aged above 18 in the state. As many as 5,000 doses of Covaxin have reached the hospital

Curbing Covid: Stalin assigns min to each dist

Ministers should ensure implementation of lockdown; monitor that oxygen is used properly, not sold in black market

A Covid patient being carried to a hospital in Chennai on Sunday | P JAWAHAR

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Chennai

CHIEF MINISTER MK Stalin has allotted ministers for every district to monitor the ongoing Covid-19 containment measures. Speaking at the first cabinet meeting held at the Secretariat here on Sunday, he said, "The ministers should ensure full implementation of the lockdown. Oxygen is being supplied to both government and private hospitals under challenging circumstances. Ministers should monitor that the life-saving gas is used in a proper manner and not sold in black market at the hospitals." He said the ministers must ensure that not even a single patient dies because of Covid-19.

Moreover, according to a health ministry's order, Remdesivir drug is now being sold in Salem, Coimbatore, Tiruchy, Madurai, and Tirunelveli districts, apart from Chennai, for patients undergoing treatment in private hospitals. Stalin said, "The ministers would oversee the sale of the drug and ensure that it is not sold in black markets."

Listing out the responsibilities of ministers, Stalin said they should make sure that every patient who arrives at a hospital gets the medical assistance that he/she needs. "Necessary measures should be adopted to provide quality food to patients, doctors, nurses, and other hospital staff," he noted.

Kerala govt directs all hospitals to focus on corona patients till May 31

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@T'Puram

THE state is gearing up to face the worst-case scenario. Anticipating a surge in the number of patients with severe Covid-19 infection in the coming days, the health department has directed all hospitals to focus on Covid patients till May 31. All hospitals have to prepare for the challenge by arranging more oxygen beds and Covid outpatient services, as per the directive issued by the health principal secretary on Sunday.

All government taluk hospitals will have to arrange the maximum number of oxygen beds and at least five beds attached with Bipap ventilators (non-invasive types that can be operated without the help of an expert doctor).

All primary and family health centres have been asked to keep a sufficient stock of steroids and oral anticoagulants to stabilise patients in home care in case of emergencies.

The state reported 35,801 new Covid patients and 68 deaths on Sunday. The number of patients under treatment has crossed four lakh mark and the test positivity rate on the day was 28.9 per cent.

"The time till May 31 will be crucial when we get to know the effects of the lockdown. The guidelines show that we need to tread carefully during this period," said Kerala Government Medical Officers' Association (KGMOA) president Dr G S Vijayakrishnan.

The directions underlined the importance of preparing the hospitals for exclusive Covid treatment. As a result, only emergency non-Covid patients will get treatment in government hospitals till May 31. The department directed the hospitals to convert fever clinics into Covid clinics where the pandemic patients can visit for necessary consultation, lab services and medicines.

"We will be focusing on Covid patients for at least a week. Some of the taluk hospitals have the Bipap ventilators purchased during the first wave though these had never been used. The stock of medicines at PHCs is also crucial to stabilise patients and buy time till we could shift them to a hospital," said Dr Vijayakrishnan.

NEW DIRECTIVES

- Convert fever clinics into Covid clinics, private hospitals can start Covid OP
- All government hospitals to focus on Covid cases till May 31
- Taluk hospitals should have oxygen beds and at least 5 Bipap ventilators
- Attach CSLTCs to each taluk hospital
- PHCs/ FHCs/other hospitals to stock steroids and oral anticoagulants
- Oxygen concentrators can be arranged for bedridden Covid patients
- Private hospitals to increase Covid oxygen beds and ICU beds to minimum 50% capacity

CONNING THE SICK

₹44,000 for PPE kit! Private hospital in Kochi fleeces patient

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Kochi

ANSON Antony was shocked when he was handed a bill of ₹1,67,381 for 10 days of Covid treatment at a private hospital in Kochi. The 28-year-old tested positive for the disease on April 23 and was admitted to Anwar Memorial Hospital, Aluva, on April 29 when he developed pneumonia-related symptoms. According to him, the hospital charged him ₹44,000 alone for PPE kits. The hospital authorities had charged Anson ₹50,000 at the time of admission to begin his treatment. "The hospital has only limited facilities. Though I was allotted an oxygen bed and antibiotics for pneumonia, I had to remind the nurse to bring the medicines several times," said Anson.

The district collector has directed the district medical officer to intervene. "An inquiry has been initiated into the matter. The deputy DMO will submit a report to the collector soon," said Dr N K Kuttappan, DMO.

This is not an isolated incident. Shabeena, a native of Vaduthala, faced a similar ordeal from the same hospital a few days ago. Despite being admitted for Covid treatment, no doctor or nurse visited her. When she informed her relatives, they shifted her to another hospital. However, she was charged ₹24,760 while she spent less than 24 hours at the hospital. The hospital levied ₹10,416 for the PPE kit alone from her. Similarly, 81-year-old Beepathu, who was admitted for five days, was charged ₹37,352 while Ibrahim was charged ₹12,880 for the PPE kits for two days of treatment.

Karnataka govt must scale up containment strategies: Experts

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

SERUM Institute has already supplied 6.5 lakh doses of the vaccine and more consignments are expected to be delivered by the second or third week of May.

Dr Giridhar Babu, epidemiologist at the Indian Institute of Public Health, Bengaluru, said, "With the state planning to bring in reasonable number of vaccine stocks of both Covishield and Covaxin, they have to focus on micro-planning and mobilisation. This is important as it will improve completion of the inoculation phases on time. We need to make sure that the portal is working properly and details of sessions are put out accurately. Only then can we vaccinate at a faster pace. Right now, vaccination is extremely important as it helps prevent severity in case of infections and deaths."

"With a rise in cases, as seen in other countries in Europe and the UK, where they have already had their third wave, the government here should scale up containment strategies too. If both vaccination and containment strategy are taken side-by-side, we will be able to save many lives." Dr Babu also pointed out that challenges of not getting the vaccines is due to the less number of vaccine manufacturers in India. "Once more firms come in and supplies are increased, then there will be no more vaccine shortage in the state."

VACCINATION SESSION SITES FOR 18-44 AGE GROUP FROM MAY 10

- KC General Hospital, Bengaluru
- Jayanagar General Hospital, Bengaluru
- Sir C V Raman General Hospital, Bengaluru
- Government Medical Colleges, ESI Hospitals and NIMHANS in Bengaluru
- In other districts, initially vaccination will be provided at district hospitals, government medical colleges and all taluk hospitals

The existing staggered supplies of vaccines is preventing experts from even guessing when the entire state's population would be vaccinated.

However, Dr Thrilok Chandra, Karnataka Health Commisisoner, said, "Vaccination is being carried out on a continuous basis and the state is aiming to do it at the earliest. As and when the vaccine stocks arrive, the drive is being held. We have seven lakh doses of Covid-19 vaccines, including Covishield and Covaxin. We got some of the stock on Saturday and we will get more in the coming days."

Migrants desperate to leave B'luru crowd KSR station

S LALITHA @BENGALURU

AS there will be a complete lockdown in place from Monday, migrant workers made a beeline for KSR railway station en masse to leave the city for their hometowns on Sunday. A large number of families congregated in small groups very close to each other on the footpaths and parking areas without social distancing.

TNIE spoke to a few of these labourers and found that a majority of them were headed toward the eastern states and North Karnataka. Some passengers waited for even up to a day in advance to board their train. A few were pleading for tickets at the counters unaware of the fact that only reserved tickets were permitted for long distance trips.

KSR Railway Station was crowded with people who wanted to board trains to their hometowns before the lockdown came into effect, in Bengaluru on Sunday | SRIRAM B N

Mohammed Rafiq, who was leaving for Kalaburagi with his wife, three-year-old daughter, mother and brother, was at the station by 6 pm for a 11 pm train. "I was working for a construction firm in Electronic City. How will I sustain my family if we do not have work from tomorrow?" he said.Mohammed Akram and Zeesha were employees at a salon in HSR Layout. "We did not have much work the past one week and looks like we will not have work for sometime. So, we are going back to our hometown in Uttarakhand via Delhi," they said,

Akash Das, who hails from Kolkata native, was heading to work for a granite firm in Goa. "I am going to a city that will give me work," he said. A railway official said they stopped issuing platform tickets from 2 pm on Sunday but it was resumed from 8 pm. "Some of them tried to buy platform tickets. They were hoping to somehow travel with just this ticket and reach their hometown. As this would defeat the idea of social distancing, Railways decided to stop issuing platform tickets," said a an official.

'Many laws need to be addressed before extending village boundaries'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ADDITIONAL Director, Survey department, C N Sridhar said they are working on this issue.

"We are working on villages which have less than 5,000 houses and are putting together maps with the present number of houses. There is a rural development department sub-committee looking into it."

But he admitted that it is not easy as there is a minefield of laws which needs to be addressed.

Krishna Byregowda, an ex-RDPR minister, said "Villages have grown beyond the boundaries which are not legally recognised by panchayat authorities. Now they are in a grey zone. The boundary has to be extended, but this leads to practical challenges. The State and Central governments need to find a solution."

RDPR Minister K S Eshwarappa said, "We will address this issue. If there are illegal encroachments, they will also be dealt with. In one place, a village kalyani has been encroached and people have built houses. We will identify and clear all these."

10 complaints filed after AP govt caps treatment charges

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Visakhapatnam

SINCE the government capped prices and formed a three-tier structure for effective implementation of Covid management in the state amid reports of private hospitals overcharging patients, the Vigilance and Enforcement department has received 10 complaints (two from Vizag) through its helpline number, said Vigilance SP Sudheer Kumar Reddy.

Speaking on the complaints, the SP said some hospitals asked the Covid patients to get Remdesivir or pay ₹20,000 per injection, which costs around ₹2,500-₹3,000 in government hospitals. Some hospitals, according to the complaints, were charging ₹30,000 per day for Covi treatment against ₹16,500 fixed by the State government. Three cases were filed against hospitals for overcharging for treatment and Remdesivir injections.

Two complainants alleged that Covid patients are not getting injections and medicines and the issue has been resolved after taking up the matter with the respective hospital managements.

'Chamarajanagar to get more CCCs if cases rise'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

THE Health Department and local anganwadi workers have now been directed to look into the cause for the spread of coronavirus to these hamlets. It takes 1-2 hours by foot to reach these villages. Hawkers and other outsiders have also stopped visiting the hamlets.

Although Covid-19 cases are lesser in Hanur taluk compared to other pockets in the district, the increase in new cases in M M Hills panchayats, Gopinatham, Kowdahalli and in tribals haadis had prompted the district administration to convert M M Hills Kshetra Development Authority-run lodges into Covid Care Centers. Due to shortage of volunteers, around 100 staffers of the Authority are working at the CCCs after an appeal from the district administration.

Chamamajanagar Deputy Commissioner M R Ravi said that they have planned to open more Covid Care Centers if the cases spike further. Hanur taluk still has the lowest number of Covid-positive cases and there are plans to utilise the Backward Community and Minority hostels in Ramapura as CCCs, he added. "We are ready to increase the beds and open more CCCs. But logistics is an issue as M M Hills is too far from the district hospital to move doctors, nurses or other facilities during emergency. The district administration has added oxygenated beds at Holy Cross Hospital in Kamagere to meet the requirement of the Hanur taluk. If there is any further increase in cases, the patients will be moved to Kollegal and Chamarajanagar towns," he added.

ಶಿವಮೊಗ್ಗ, ದಾವಣಗೆರೆ ಮತ್ತು ಚಿತ್ರದುರ್ಗ ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಸಹಕಾರ ಹಾಲು ಉತ್ಪಾದಕರ ಸಂಘಗಳ ಒಕ್ಕೂಟ ನಿ.,
ಮಾಚೇನಹಳ್ಳಿ, ನಿದಿಗೆ ಅಂಚೆ, ಶಿವಮೊಗ್ಗ 577 222

ಐ.ಎಫ್.ಬಿ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ/ಶಿದಾಚಿಸಹಾಒ/ಖರೀದಿ/ಇ-ಪ್ರೊ/ಟೆಂಡರ್-28ಸಿ/1055/2021-22 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 4.05.2021

ಇ-ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ

(ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ಇ-ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್
https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in ನ ಮೂಲಕ ಮಾತ್ರ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವುದು)

ಶಿವಮೊಗ್ಗ, ದಾವಣಗೆರೆ ಮತ್ತು ಚಿತ್ರದುರ್ಗ ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಸಹಕಾರ ಹಾಲು ಒಕ್ಕೂಟಕ್ಕೆ ಅಗತ್ಯವಿರುವ ಈ ಕೆಳಕಂಡ ಸಾಮಗ್ರಿ/ಯಂತ್ರೋಪಕರಣಗಳ ಖರೀದಿಗೆ ಅರ್ಹ ಆಸಕ್ತ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯವರಿಂದ ಜಿ.ಒ.ಕೆಯ ಇ-ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಎರಡು ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಡಾಕ್ಯುಮೆಂಟ್ ಸಿಸ್ಟಮ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಇ-ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಅನ್ನು ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದ್ದು ವಿವರ ಕೆಳಕಂಡಂತಿದೆ.

ಕ್ರ. ಸಂ.	ವಿವರ	ಪ್ರಮಾಣ	ಪಾವತಿಸಬೇಕಾದ ಇ.ಎಂ.ಡಿ
1.	ಮಾಚೇನಹಳ್ಳಿಯಲ್ಲಿರುವ ಶಿವಮೊಗ್ಗ ಡೈರಿಗೆ ಇಂಕ್‌ಜೆಟ್ ಪ್ರಿಂಟರ್ (ಅಡ್ವಾನ್ಸ್‌ಡ್ ವರ್ಷನ್) ಅನ್ನು ಅಗತ್ಯ ಆಸೆಸರಿಸ್‌ಗಳೊಂದಿಗೆ ಸರಬರಾಜು ಮಾಡಿ ಅಳವಡಿಸುವುದು.	02 ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ	ಘೋಷಣ ಪತ್ರವನ್ನು ಸೂಚಿಸಲಾದ ನಮೂನೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವುದು.
2.	ಮಾಚೇನಹಳ್ಳಿಯಲ್ಲಿರುವ ಶಿವಮೊಗ್ಗ ಡೈರಿಗೆ ವಾರ್ಷಿಕ ದರ ಒಪ್ಪಂದದ ಮೇರೆಗೆ ಮೇವಿನ ಸೌತ್ ಆಫ್ರಿಕನ್ ಮೆಕ್ಕೆ ಜೋಳವನ್ನು ಸರಬರಾಜು ಮಾಡುವುದು.	60,000 ಕೆ.ಜಿ	ಘೋಷಣ ಪತ್ರವನ್ನು ಸೂಚಿಸಲಾದ ನಮೂನೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವುದು.
3.	ಕೃತಕ ಗರ್ಭಧಾರಣೆಯ ಕ್ರೇಟ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ಶಿವಮೊಗ್ಗ ಡೇರಿಗೆ ಸರಬರಾಜು ಮಾಡುವುದು.	50 ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ	ಘೋಷಣ ಪತ್ರವನ್ನು ಸೂಚಿಸಲಾದ ನಮೂನೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವುದು.

1. ಟೆಂಡರ್ ದಾಸ್ತವೇಜುಗಳನ್ನು ಜಿ.ಒ.ಕೆ ಯ ಇ-ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮೂಲಕ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 10.05.2021 ರಿಂದ ಡೌನ್‌ಲೋಡ್ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳಬಹುದಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ.
2. ಭರ್ತಿ ಮಾಡಿದ ಟೆಂಡರು ದಾಖಲಾತಿಗಳನ್ನು ಅಪಲೋಡ್ ಮಾಡುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 26.05.2021 ರಂದು ಸಮಯ: ಸಂಜೆ 4.00 ಗಂಟೆ ಒಳಗೆ.
3. ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 27.05.2021 ರಂದು ಸಮಯ: ಸಂಜೆ 5.00 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ.
4. ವಾಣಿಜ್ಯ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 28.05.2021 ರಂದು ಸಮಯ: ಸಂಜೆ 5.00 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ.
5. ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ದಾರರು ವಿವರವಾದ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ದಾಸ್ತವೇಜುಗಳನ್ನು ಜಿ.ಒ.ಕೆ ಯ ಇ-ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮೂಲಕ ನಿಗದಿತ ಇ-ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಶುಲ್ಕ ಪಾವತಿಸಿ ಡೌನ್‌ಲೋಡ್ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳುವುದು.

ಮೇಲ್ಕಂಡ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಭಾಗವಹಿಸಲು ಸಂಬಂಧಿಸಿದ ವಿವರಗಳನ್ನು ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ದಾರರು ಇ-ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in ಗೆ ಲಾಗ್‌ಇನ್ ಆಗುವ ಮೂಲಕ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದಾಗಿದ್ದು, ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಮಾಹಿತಿಗಾಗಿ ಖರೀದಿ ವಿಭಾಗದ ಮುಖ್ಯಸ್ಥರನ್ನು ದೂರವಾಣಿ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: 08182-246161/246163 ಮೊಬೈಲ್ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: 7760971951ರ ಮೂಲಕ ಸಂಪರ್ಕಿಸಬಹುದಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ.

ಸಹಿ/- ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥಾಪಕ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರು
ಶಿವಮೊಗ್ಗ, ದಾವಣಗೆರೆ ಮತ್ತು ಚಿತ್ರದುರ್ಗ ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಸಹಕಾರ ಹಾಲು ಒಕ್ಕೂಟ ನಿ.,

BANGALORE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY COMPANY LIMITED
(Wholly Owned by Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
(CIN-U04010KA2002SGC030438)

BRIEF TENDER NOTIFICATION (Through e-procurement portal)

BESCOM invites tender for the following **Enquiry No:BESCOM /DGM(SG&EV)/BC-53/2021-22/ENQ-02 dated:04.05.2021** For "Supply, Installation, Commissioning and Maintenance of 149 Nos of Automatic Power factor Correction (APFC) Systems for Distribution Transformer Centres in BESCOM". Issue of Bid Documents From **17.05.2021 @ 17:00** hrs onwards. Last Date for Bid Submission **19.06.2021** upto **17:00** hrs. Opening of Bid Documents on **21.06.2021** at **17:00** hrs. **Last Date for submission of Queries through e-portal 26.05.2021 before 17:00 hrs.** Pre-bid meeting on **27.05.2021**at **11:00** hrs at Board Room Corporate Office, BESCOM / Through V.C. The Bid documents can be downloaded and necessary assistance can be obtained through the e-procurement portal from the Website **https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in.** Aspiring bidders need to register on e-procurement portal. Bidders can take the assistance from the office of the Deputy General Manager (Ele), SG&EV, 2nd Block, 1st Floor, Corporate Office, BESCOM, Bangalore. Contact No: 9449840344

Sd/-
Deputy General Manager
(SG&EV) Corporate Office, BESCOM

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No. 2A, "The Phoenix", Hayes Road, Bengaluru-560025
Telephone: 080 - 4211 9003

No. CSG/001/HRD/2021-22 Date: 10-05-2021

NOTIFICATION

Centre for Smart Governance (CSG), DPAR(e-gov), Government of Karnataka invites applications from eligible candidates in the areas of IT / ICT for the positions listed below:

• Project Manager-06 Nos.	• Project Lead-03 Nos.
• Solution Architect-01 No.	• Business Analyst-05 Nos.
• Senior Software Engineer-08 Nos.	• Software Engineers-42 Nos.
• Test Lead-02 Nos.	• Test Engineer-10 Nos.
• Operations Manager-04 Nos.	• Database Designer-04 Nos.
• Database Administrator-04 Nos.	• System Administrator-02 Nos.

Interested candidates are requested to send their CVs through e-Mail to **careerscsg@karnataka.gov.in on or before 30-06-2021.**

For further details on qualification & Experience, Please refer **https://csg.karnataka.gov.in**

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STAY PROTECTED FROM COVID-19, NO CARELESSNESS UNTIL THERE IS A CURE.

Wear Mask | 6 Feet Follow Physical Distancing | Maintain Hand Hygiene

EDITORIAL

Health is the greatest gift, contentment is the greatest wealth, a trusted friend is the best relative, *Nibbana* is the greatest bliss

Siddhartha Gautama

INDIAN EXPRESS IS NOT AN INDUSTRY. IT IS A MISSION.

— Ramnath Goenka

THIS SURYA SPREADS MORE DARKNESS THAN LIGHT

The virus, in its second coming, has consumed Karnataka like a wildfire. The state apparatus, lulled into a deceptive sense of victory as the first wave abated, was literally hit from behind. Consequently, when cries for oxygen and hospital beds started rending the air, chaos reigned and the districts were left to fight it out with each other on demand-supply. Most stark was the finger-pointing between Mysuru and Chamarajanagar—the latter saw over two dozen patients gasping to death in one brief spell of horror (14 more died thereafter).

Bengaluru, however, is by far the most ravaged. Everything was/is in short supply—oxygen, hospitals, beds, medicines, space to bid a dignified farewell to the dead. Ministers, MPs and MLAs scramble to cater to their irate constituents and supporters. This is the context in which South Bengaluru MP Tejaswi Surya—who excels in turning himself into the news—pulled his communal cowboy act, claiming to have unearthed a bed allocation scam in one of Bengaluru corporation's Covid war rooms. Why the names he read out were to be deemed de facto guilty was no secret—religion was itself offered as the sign of guilt. One of the MLAs in his team even spat out the word 'madrassa'. A bureaucrat with no link to bed allocation process was dragged in too. Same reason, of course.

After a public backlash, Surya was forced to issue a partial apology (though not admitting to his real, wilful mistake), and 16 innocent employees were reinstated. No Indian municipal corporation is above blemish. But for lawmakers to vilify and target a community amidst a full-blown pandemic is shockingly reminiscent of the worst the world has seen. Leave aside their constitutional oath, we are reminded of the supremacist posses of the American South in another century. In these dark times, the least lawmakers can do is not add to the darkness around us. There must be a price to pay for this.

INDIA'S OLY PROSPECTS TOO TAKE COVID HIT

The cruel invisible hand of fate is fiddling with every individual's destiny in the country during this unrelenting second wave of the pandemic. Like with every other discipline, the world of sport is also not being spared. Deaths of Olympic champions, players testing positive and Games qualifiers getting postponed or cancelled are a few instances that reflect the predicament of life currently. The most heartbreaking news was the demise of 1980 Olympic gold medallist M K Kaushik and teammate Ravinder Pal Singh (both men's hockey). This came just days after the death of veteran sports administrator R K Sacheti.

On the playing arena, the postponement of the Malaysia Open, scheduled from May 25 to 30, is a big blow to the chances of more Indian shuttlers qualifying for the Olympics, especially 2012 bronze medallist Saina Nehwal and former World No. 1 Kidambi Srikanth. Both are off the qualifying bracket as of now and needed this event and the India Open to get back into it. With both events offering a lot of points, a decent run could have propelled them inside the qualifying berths. Complicating matters is the uncertainty of the Singapore Open; with the country shutting its doors to Indians because of the second wave, chances are Srikanth and Saina may not even get to go there. Both need to be ranked above 16 to qualify as the second shuttler from the country. While Srikanth is ranked 18, Saina is 22nd in the 'Race to Tokyo' list. This essentially means that even if they win the title in Singapore—an event they aren't even sure of playing in the first place—they may still not make it. It's why the Badminton Association of India (BAI) wrote to the World Badminton Federation (BWF), asking it to tweak the qualifying rules.

While one can argue that the two have not had a good couple of years and that's why they are out of the reckoning—B Sai Praneeth and P V Sindhu virtually sealed qualifying spots even before the pandemic-enforced break—it's important to note that Saina and Srikanth will have been banking on these events. It sounds a little unfair to cancel events without providing alternatives for players on the cusp of qualification. With so much uncertainty, it would be prudent for the BWF to tweak their qualifying norms or extend the dates beyond June 13.

A reading of the Constituent Assembly debates will show how meticulously our founding fathers drafted Article 324 to make the poll panel independent and autonomous

THE ELECTION COMMISSION SHOULD NOT GAG SPEECH

A SURYA PRAKASH

Former Chairman, Prasar Bharati and Scholar, Democracy Studies

AMIT BANDRE

The Election Commission of India (ECI) may have legitimate reasons to be aggrieved about the harsh comments made by the judges of the Madras High Court, but its attempt to restrain oral comments of judges and prohibit the media from reporting the exchanges in court substantially weakened its case.

The Supreme Court turned down the ECI's plea to expunge the remarks of the High Court and to restrain the media. While disposing of the Commission's petition, Justice D Y Chandrachud declared that open access to court is "the cornerstone of constitutional freedom". The internet has revolutionised courtroom reporting and real-time updates are part of freedom of speech and extension of the open court. It is therefore retrograde to gag reporting of court proceedings.

The judges of the High Court asked the Commission officials as to why they allowed political parties to carry on the election campaign without observing Covid protocols. Describing the Commission as an irresponsible institution, the judges said the officials should probably be hauled up for murder. The ECI felt dismayed at the "intemperate language" used by judges and rushed to the Supreme Court seeking expunction of the high court's remarks.

The initial observations of the Bench comprising Justices D Y Chandrachud and M R Shah to the ECI's plea is worthy of mention. They said exchanges between the Bar and the Bench instilled a sense of confidence among the public about what has transpired in the court. This dialogue between the Bar and Bench fosters the system of justice.

In conclusion, the Supreme Court said the High Courts have played a commendable role in handling the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the Madras High Court's remarks were "harsh" and that there must be judicial restraint while making off-the-cuff remarks. As regards the media, the court said there was "no substance" in the ECI prayer to restrain them from reporting judicial proceedings.

It has been argued on behalf of the ECI that the Commission does not take over governance during elections. It only issues guidelines. If there is a breach, the ECI cannot be held responsible. This argument is absolutely fallacious. A Commission that regularly transfers senior officials in states—it moved out the West Bengal DGP by an order and replaced him with another officer on March 9—now claims that it "does not take over governance"! Further, the Commission that closely monitors the working of state governments from the day the election is announced is now claiming that it is helpless if its guidelines are not followed!

One wonders whether the citizens' right to free and fair elections is safe in the hands of bureaucrats who are manning the ECI today. The Commission's specious arguments and its attempt to gag the media are matters of concern. A reading of the Constituent Assembly debates will show how meticulously our founding fathers drafted Article 324 to make the ECI independent and autonomous and provide every Chief Election Commissioner a *vajra kavach*—a strong impenetrable armour—in the form of the proviso to Article 324(5) that gives him the security of office like that of a judge of the Supreme Court, so that he or she may function fearlessly. Apart from this, a simple reading of Article 324, which gives it the power of "superintendence, direction and control of elections", should demolish the ECI's "I am helpless" argument.

> It can be said that every government has hand-picked election commissioners. It is also reasonable to presume that in every major election, every government has had its wish list. But ultimately, the ECI must have its way

One of the barbs that is flung at the Narendra Modi government is that it has hand-picked the election commissioners in order to influence the Commission's decisions. This writer has no knowledge about the truth or otherwise of this charge, but having seen the working of the ECI from the days of S L Shakdher as the chief election commissioner (when Morarji Desai, Charan Singh and Indira Gandhi held the office of prime minister); R V S Peri Sastri (appointed when Rajiv Gandhi was prime minister); and T N Seshan (appointed by the Chandrashekar government at the instance of Rajiv Gandhi, one is told); it can be said that every government has hand-picked the CEC and the election commissioners. It is also reasonable to presume that in every major election, every government has had its wish list relating to polling dates, etc. One part of this interaction with the ECI is formal while the other part is informal. But ultimately, when it comes to determining the dates of polling, etc., the government can have its say, but the ECI must have its way. Those who feel this equilibrium is disturbed will ask questions, not of the government, but the Election Commission, and the poll panel is bound to answer.

In the present context, the most controversial decision taken by the ECI relates to an eight-phase poll in West Bengal, as against a single day poll on April 6 in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry and 40 seats in Assam. In other words, the ECI held polls in 444 constituencies in all these states on a single day but wanted eight-phase polling for 294 constituencies in West Bengal. What is the justification? The Commission must answer. When the daily rise of Covid cases shot beyond one lakh in the first week of April, why did it not curtail the campaign or strictly enforce norms? It eventually took some half-hearted steps after the Madras High Court rapped it on the knuckles.

The ECI must answer these questions. It cannot short-circuit the debate. As the Supreme Court observed during the hearing: "Institutions have to be strong and vibrant for democracy to survive". There cannot be two opinions about that.

(suryamedia@gmail.com)

OUR TRADITIONAL MEDICINE FRATERNITY MUST RISE UP

ANURADHA GOYAL

Author and founder of blogging website IndiTales

The pandemic has lasted longer than we could have imagined and seems to be in no hurry to leave. Thankfully, we know how it spreads; we have vaccines to deal with it. As our medical facilities and the fraternity deal with this massive onslaught, one wonders why we have not seen anything substantial from the field of traditional medicine systems like ayurveda, homeopathy, naturopathy, unani and siddha. There is a full ministry in the Government of India dedicated to supporting these traditional medicine streams for a good seven years now. Its biggest achievement to date seems to be Yoga Day celebrations, for which it is currently running online contests.

If the allopathic fraternity could develop vaccines and quick protocols to deal with the unexpected virus, why have the alternative medicine practices not come up with anything yet? Yes, I know, they have been telling us to drink warm water and *kaadha* but that is what our grandmothers too tell us. There is no way to know if this has been effective enough. I am not aware of any studies that indicate efficacy or lend us confidence and conviction.

Ayush 64, a repurposed malaria drug from the 1980s, has been recommended for mild and moderate cases but comes with a caveat of 'Adjunct with standard care'. Public domain reports say that it has been tested in three different cities that found it useful and safe. If it can work independently, no one says anything about that.

The pandemic is a new challenge and ayurveda and other systems have a huge opportunity to come out with solutions quickly. There are three main phases of the disease to address. The first is preventive, that prevents the disease in the first place or helps build up immunity to deal with it. The second is actual treatment for those who are infected, and the third is rehabilitation or post-recovery care that helps regain health lost in the process.

As and when the second wave of the pandemic comes down, we would have a huge population of people who have successfully battled the disease, but are still dealing with the long-term after-effects. Most recovered people complain of general weakness, body aches and lethargy for long durations of time. This is a huge opportunity for the traditional medicine systems to explore working on providing post-recovery relief. Given the general understanding as well as perception that there are minimal or zero side effects of traditional medicines and practices, they would be such a welcome step after people have taken in heavy and extra doses of allopathic drugs to deal with the virus. Add to it all the stress that they have gone through while at hospital and by being witness to so much pain and grief all around.

> As our medical facilities deal with this massive onslaught, one wonders why we have not seen anything substantial from the field of traditional medicine systems like ayurveda. Every calamity presents an opportunity; the pandemic is a big one for traditional medicine systems to show their strength

Can the Ayush fraternity come out with post-recovery Covid care solutions? If someone is going to tell me they do exist in some corners of the country, then they need to engage in a massive communications exercise. They need to make us, the common citizens, aware of their presence along with the options available to us. However, I will stick my neck out and assume they need to come out with the solution as the problem is recent, the scale unprecedented and, if they can see, the opportunity immense. The opportunity is big not just for providing solutions and helping people heal but also for carving out a space in the mental map of the average person who needs to be convinced about exploring traditional medicines the next time they need help.

Ayurveda therapies are personalised based on various parameters, the primary one being the nature or *prakriti* of a human being. This means that the doctors need to spend far more time with their patients, which should ideally mean a lot more doctors are needed. I am not sure if they have explored telemedicine for pandemic care or for regular diseases during the pandemic; most probably, they have not.

Various sources put the number of Ayush medical professionals between eight to fourteen lakhs, with more than 50% of them being ayurveda doctors and more than 35% being homeopaths. We have seen ayurveda doctors work in the wellness tourism industry, which includes luxury resorts and spas across the country, but a lot more in places like Kerala that have managed to create a reliable brand around ayurveda. We do see one-off ayurveda hospitals and famous doctors in our towns. A few young doctors are creating their own brands using social media, while others choose to work with the cosmetics industry. Some of them find success easier outside India. However, their collective presence or branding under one umbrella is nowhere close to where it should be.

As per the colourful Ayush ministry dashboard, there are allocations of ₹2,000 crore for the last financial year, about 4,000 hospitals, 27,000 dispensaries and just about 750 ongoing research projects. Do we have proportional outputs to show?

Every calamity presents an opportunity; the pandemic is a big one for traditional medicine systems to show their strength and generate much-needed faith in these systems while helping humanity heal.

(Tweets @anuradhagoyal)

MAILBAG

WRITE TO: letters@newindianexpress.com

MSMEs, employees hit

For the past year, India has been reeling under one of the worst health disasters the world has ever witnessed. Wealthy people are able to cope up with the lockdowns and shutdowns. But the health crisis has led to the closure of small businesses and many employed by them have been let go. The Union and state government should take necessary steps to help them in this time of crisis.
P S Swagatika Sahoo, Jagatsinghpur

Private hospital scam

It is sad to see a hospital collecting huge fees before discharging patients claiming oxygen shortage and then continuing the cycle with other patients (*Covid patients, relatives accuse Tenkasi private hospital of fleecing them*, May 5). The government should step in.
S Sathavu, Theni

Insightful articles

I am happy to see more and more valuable articles worth reading in the Sunday edition. Pushpesh Pant has rightly said that the "media has cowered and crawled shamelessly with the rarest of rare exceptions". The columns by T J S George, Ravi Shankar and Anand Neelakantan are worth reading. And Kaleeswaram Raj has correctly pointed out the need for an independent poll panel to end its partisan actions.
V O Harindranathan, Chennai

Will change alone help?

An election commissioner committed to the Constitution can never become a pliable tool in the hands of unscrupulous politicos. A change in the selection method alone may not help (*Poll panel needs radical reforms*, May 9).
S Madhavan Thampi, Haripad

Kudos to Tamil Nadu CM

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin deserves appreciation for picking V Irai Anbu as the new chief secretary. The highly respected and reputed bureaucrat brings with him his vast administrative experience and goodwill, which should augur well for good and people-oriented governance.
R Sivakumar, Chennai

Will be long remembered

The passing away of Soli Sorabjee, a man with a rare intellect and command over jurisprudence, is an irreparable loss to the nation. A champion of individual and civil liberties, he stood by those who fought for human and constitutionally guaranteed rights. His rich career as an eminent jurist will be long remembered and cherished.
Niranjan Sahoo, Bhubaneswar

Extend it to 60+ men

I congratulate the DMK government on its decision to implement free travel in ordinary buses to women irrespective of their age. I request the CM to extend this facility to senior male citizens above 60.
S Vaithianathan, Madurai

She was rejected by people

When Bengal gave a landslide victory to the TMC, everyone praised Mamata Banerjee. Well, any winner deserves praise. But commentators have ignored the fact that she herself was rejected by the people in the election and lost the polls. Yet, she got herself installed in the CM's chair immediately. While the laws might permit it, she should have waited. And after the TMC victory, violence has started again, with an exodus to a neighbouring state.
Dilip Kumar C D, Bengaluru

Political morality?

The covert support of the SDPI also helped in the victory of the LDF (*The subtext of the election verdict*, May 6). The author has said that voters have asserted their political morality. In reality, the numerous scams in which the government has been involved were ignored due to the welfare measures.
Asokakumar V, Thrikkunapuzha

LDF's welfare measures

All the attempts of the opposition in tarnishing the good image of the Pinarayi government failed miserably. The people of Kerala have once again risen above caste and religious considerations and voted for the welfare measures of the LDF. The strategy of the CPM in giving a chance to young candidates also paid rich dividends.
P G Moorthy, Thiruvananthapuram

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TWEETS OF THE DAY

Jairam Ramesh @Jairam_Ramesh
Please supply the vaccines first, Dr Minister @drharshvardhan, before lecturing citizens

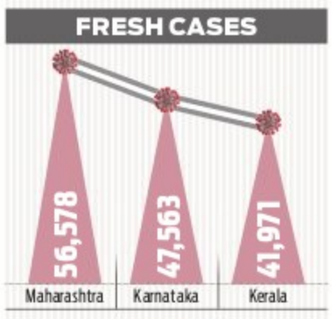
Yashwant Sinha @YashwantSinha
Our PM has not addressed even one press conference in 7 years because he does not like to be questioned. All his conversation is a monologue

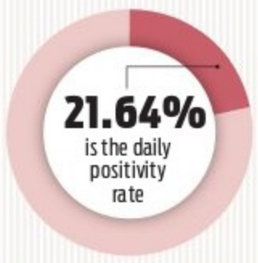
Dr. Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank @DrRPNishank
India is administering the world's largest vaccination drive against Covid-19. 16 crore vaccine doses administered in 109 days, at a faster pace than the US and China

INDIA'S COVID TRACKER

10 states account for over 71% of new cases

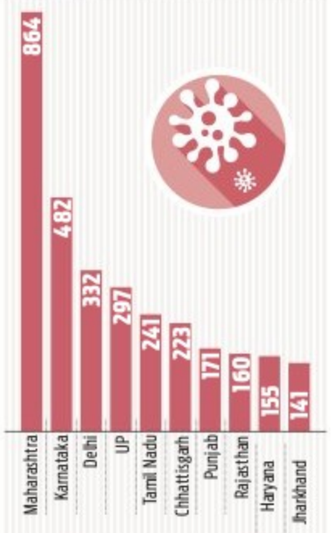
FRESH CASES



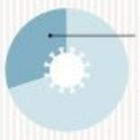


A deserted view of Prayagraj in UP during Sunday's lockdown | PTI

FRESH DEATHS



20 STATES, UTs
have deaths per million population lower than national average (176)



70%
of the deaths occurred due to comorbidities

GLOBAL RELIEF

6,738
oxygen concentrators

3,856
oxygen cylinders

16
oxygen generation plants

3
lakh Remdesivir vials

All have been delivered or despatched to various states and UTs between April 27 and May 8, according to the Union Health Ministry

Source: Health Ministry

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inspects Pandit Rajan Mishra Covid temporary hospital in Varanasi on Sunday | PTI

Union minister flags UP's Covid plan

Eight-time MP Santosh Gangwar writes to CM Yogi, cites black marketing of oxygen, drugs

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Lucknow

DESPITE repeated assurances of Uttar Pradesh government that it was taking all efforts to contain the Covid pandemic in the BJP-ruled state, some Parliament members of the ruling party have been flagging the scathing issues faced by the public in their constituencies.

On Sunday Union minister and eight-time BJP MP from Bareilly constituency, Santosh Gangwar wrote to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, highlighting the problems faced by Covid patients and their families. The veteran politician of the ruling party has also suggested some measures to improve the healthcare facilities in the district as well as the state.

Gangwar has alleged that senior officers of the state medical department in Bareilly district were not attending phone calls of patients and attendants.

The union minister also raised the issue of people storing oxygen cylinders in their house as a precautionary measure, which was adding to the scarcity of medical oxygen in the district. There is an urgent need for identifying such people who are unnecessarily storing oxygen or are even black-marketing the cylinders, the MP said.

He also raised the issue of patients being forced to run from one hospital to another in the name of referral letter. He suggested the UP CM to set up oxygen plants in Bareilly to ease in dealing with the increased demand of oxygen in the state.

While pointing fingers at black-marketing of essential medical equipment used in hospitals, Gangwar suggested the chief minister that prices of medical equipment should be capped, while private hospitals registered under MSME should be given fiscal support.

Just two days ago, BJP's Lok Sabha member from Kanpur, Satyadev Pachauri had written a letter to the UP CM, mentioning that Covid-19 patients weren't getting good treatment and many of them were losing lives outside their homes, outside hospitals or even in ambulances in Kanpur in want of adequate life-saving treatment.

Pachauri had also suggested that the UP government should make all possible preparations now for combating the expected third wave of the fatal viral infection.

Prior to it, Kaushal Kishor, BJP MP from Mohanlalganj in Lucknow district, too had written to the CM raising concern over shortage of medical oxygen, life-saving medicines and other necessary hospital equipment in Lucknow district.

"There are cases in which the patient despite taking a referral and going to the government hospital is asked to go back to the district hospital and get the referral done again— Santosh Gangwar, Bareilly MP

Punjab seeks increase in O_2 quota as Modi calls up 4 more CMs

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday spoke to the chief ministers of Punjab, Karnataka, Bihar and Uttarakhand on the Covid-19 situation in their states.

The PM has been speaking to state chief ministers and lieutenant governors of union territories for the last few days to assess the pandemic situation and offer suggestions.

Chief ministers have also briefed him on the measures being taken by them to deal with the raging second wave of the pandemic.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi called up for an update on Covid cases in Uttarakhand. I apprised him with the present situation," Chief Minister Tirath Singh Rawat said in a tweet.

The Covid-19 situation continues to be grim in Uttarakhand with around 7,000 to 9,000 people testing positive daily for the disease for the last several days.

A total of 8,390 people had tested positive for coronavirus on Saturday while 118 more people succumbed to the infection.

Meanwhile, Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh urged the PM to increase the state's oxygen quota and ensure urgent supplies of anti-Covid-19 vaccines.

The chief minister raised these issues when Modi called him up to discuss the state's Covid-19 situation.

The Prime Minister assured all possible help, Singh said.

The chief minister hoped that the Centre would take immediate steps to supplement oxygen supplies and ensure vaccine doses are sent on priority to help the Punjab government effectively manage the situation triggered by the second wave of the pandemic, an official statement said.

Singh told the Prime Minister the state was unable to initiate phase-III of the vaccination process for the 18-44 age group people, but it will now begin in government hospitals from Monday following the delivery of one lakh doses.

For the 45 plus age group too, the vaccine was in short supply and while 1.63 lakh doses were expected to come on Sunday, these were not enough to meet the state's requirement, he said. *With agency inputs*

Orphaned children need care, protection: NCPCR

CONTINUED FROM P1

IN fact, children becoming orphaned is the scary new face of the second wave, making it different from the first phase and underlining the monumental human suffering and tragedy of the pandemic.

Driven by the highly infectious B.1.617 variant of the virus, the second wave has seen entire families being laid low by the virus. This was not so in the first phase of the pandemic.

Last year, a person getting infected did not necessarily mean that others in the family also contracted the disease. But the current surge is different, with the virus affecting almost all in the family. This is at times leading to death of both parents.

Cases of children being orphaned has also come to the government's notice. In a letter to all chief secretaries on May 2, National Commission for Protection of Child Rights chairperson Priyank Kanoongo drew the attention of state governments of "children who have become orphans due to the death of both parents from Covid-19".

Kanoongo said children who are "found to be abandoned are in need of care and protection under the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015, and such children must be produced before the Child Welfare Committee".

When contacted, Bhopal's Child Line director Archana Sahay and MP Commission for Protection of Child Rights member Brijesh Chauhan said they were aware of the twins losing their parents.

"It is in our knowledge and we will soon send a team to Mankesh Raikwar's house," Sahay said.

"We will bring the twins under the state government's child sponsorship scheme. This will ensure ₹2,000 per month to each of the twin sisters. We will do whatever is possible to help the twins and take care of their future," she added. According to Chauhan, "we are also planning a reserve fund with contributions from people, including industrialists and other donors, to secure the future of children who have lost both parents to Covid."

Govt approves recruitment of retired docs of armed forces for Covid duty

MAYANK SINGH @ New Delhi

THE Ministry of Defence (MoD) has approved the temporary recruitment of retired doctors of the armed forces to meet the requirement in view of the rising Covid-19 cases.

"The MoD has issued an order to Directorate General Armed Forces Medical Services (DG AFMS) for recruitment of ex-Army Medical Corps (AMC)/Short Service Commission (SSC) medical officers. Under the 'Tour of Duty' scheme, 400 ex-AMC/SSC medical officers, released between 2017 and 2021, are expected to be recruited on a contract basis for a maximum period of 11 months," Bharat Bhushan Babu, spokesperson, MoD, said.

The order issued on May 8 says the fixed monthly lump sum amount will be admissible by deducting the basic pension from the salary drawn at the time of retirement, plus specialist pay wherever applicable. The amount would remain unchanged for the term of the contract and no other allowances would be paid.

The medical officers to be recruited are required to be medically fit as per civilian standards. Previously, the AFMS deployed additional doctors, including specialists, super specialists and paramedics, at various hospitals, while SSC doctors have been granted extension till December 31, 2021, which has augmented the strength by 238 more doctors.

Medical professionals who recently retired from the AFMS have also been redeployed to further bolster the workforce of health professionals.

In addition, ex-defence doctors have been roped in to provide online free consultation on e-Sanjeevani OPD to all citizens of the country. The service can be availed on the website *https://esanjeevaniopd.in*.

The additional contractual staff have also been temporarily hired in 51 high-pressure Ex-servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS) polyclinics for night duty for three months to cater to the veterans and their dependents, said Babu.

IAF operates a Covid air support management cell in New Delhi since April 27 | PTI

Country needs breath, not PM's residence, says Rahul Gandhi

New Delhi: Hitting out at the Centre for continuing the construction work for the Central Vista redevelopment project amid the raging Covid-19 pandemic, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday said the country needs breath and not the Prime Minister's residence. "The country needs breath, not the prime minister's residence," Gandhi said in a tweet, sharing pictures of people standing in a queue for refilling oxygen cylinders and the construction work for the Central Vista project on Rajpath.

Hold meetings of parliamentary panels virtually: Cong & TMC

New Delhi: The opposition Congress and TMC have written to presiding officers of Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha to allow virtual meetings of parliamentary standing committees, saying Parliament cannot be a mute spectator to the Covid crisis and must give a message of solidarity with people. In a letter to Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu, Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge said parliamentary panels can contribute to the ongoing endeavours in containing the pandemic and providing relief.

J&K administration rope in NGO to supply oxygen to care centre

Srinagar: Valley-based NGO Athrout Kashmir has been roped in by the J&K administration to ensure uninterrupted supply of medical oxygen to the patients at the new 100-bed Covid care facility set up at the Hajj House in Srinagar. Athrout Kashmir chairman Bashir Ahmed Nadwi said the infrastructure, bedding and medical staff for the hospital were provided by the administration. "All the 100 beds in the facility have oxygen availability," he said.

Raise O_2 production: Task force in 1st meet

NEW DELHI: The first meeting of the 12-member National Task Force set up by the Supreme Court to ensure the delivery of medical oxygen throughout the country in a streamlined manner, was held on Sunday.

Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan and Union Secretary (MoRTH) Giridhar Aramane were also present in the meeting, sources said.

According to the directions of the apex court, a few more experts can be co-opted in the team.

All members of the National Task Force commended the significant amount of work done by various ministries and departments of Government of India in augmenting the oxygen production capacities as well as in ensuring its efficient distribution, sources said.

The members also provided specific suggestions for further increasing oxygen production and availability, managing the demand side of medical oxygen, and parameters on which individual health facilities could ensure economy in use of medical oxygen, they said. *ENS*

No money for cremation, kin bury Bihar labourer

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ Patna

Video goes viral on social media

A video of the body being dumped into the bank of the Saura river in Bihar's Katihar district had gone viral on social media. "As per the statement of the deceased's brother, his family did not have enough money to cremate the body. The villagers told the family that the cremation of the Covid victim could be hazardous to health for others. Hence, they had dug an 8 feet deep pit to bury the body," the DM said

A video purportedly showing a Covid-19 victim's body being dumped into the bank of the Saura river in Bihar's Katihar district has gone viral on social media. Katihar's District Magistrate Udayan Mishra has verified the video clip and found it to be true. The incident took place on May 7.

"Soon after we have learnt about the incident, an inquiry panel headed by city's Magistrate, SDO and SDPO of the area, was constituted who later visited the Bheria Rahika village on Sunday. During the investigation, it was found that the person died of Covid on May 6," Mishra told this newspaper. "As per the statement of the deceased's brother, his family did not have enough money to cremate the body. Moreover, the villagers told the family members that the cremation of the Covid victim could be hazardous to health for others. Hence, they had dug an 8 feet deep pit in their own land to bury the body," Mishra said.

"After the patient, a wage labourer, had succumbed to Covid in Sadar hospital, the hospital administration then sent the body in an ambulance to the village on May 7. During the process of burial, some onlookers filmed it and made it viral on social networking platforms," Mishra said.

The DM denied that the body was dumped by the ambulance driver Vishnu Jha and other staff of the hospital. "When we spoke to the victim's son, he admitted that the family was unaware that the government pays for the last rites of a Covid-19 patient and that's why they had decided to bury the body," the DM said.

He added that the body was not exhumed as per the consent of family members and the Covid-19 guidelines.

He said the family will get compensation of ₹4 lakh as announced by the state government for Covid-19 victims.

Raj nurse held, 2 doctors under scanner for selling ICU beds

RAJESH ASNANI @ Jaipur

IN a shocking case of corruption amid the escalating corona crisis, ICU beds are allegedly being sold off for hefty bribes at Jaipur's RUHS Hospital, the biggest Covid-19 care centre in Rajasthan.

The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) of Rajasthan police has arrested a male nurse deputed at Metro Mass Hospital in Jaipur after he was caught red-handed taking a bribe of ₹23,000 from the family members of a patient on Saturday. The accused was allegedly colluding with two doctors at RUHS and had demanded ₹2 lakh to get an ICU bed for the 53-year-old woman patient.

The accused, identified as Ashok Kumar Gurjar, had already taken ₹95,000 from the family before being caught, according to ACB officials. He has been booked under various sections of the Prevention of Corruption Act. Further investigation is going on.

DG of ACB, BL Soni said that the family of the corona patient had approached the agency on Friday following which a complaint was registered. Gurjar had initially demanded ₹2 lakh from the family. Eventually, the deal was reportedly finalised for ₹1.3 lakh, said the police

During the initial interrogation, the male nurse confessed that he was in touch with a Dr Narendra who was originally at Metro Mass Hospital but is now working at the RUHS. Gurjar had phoned Dr Narendra who in turn put him in touch with one Dr Manish of the same facility. The ACB will question the doctors named by Gurjar on Monday.

A Covid-19 patient at a treatment centre in Rajasthan's Ajmer on Sunday | PTI

5 BOOKED FOR KILLING LEOPARD

A case was registered against five people for beating a leopard to death in Sohelwa wildlife sanctuary in Lucknow. An official said a leopard was found dead with injury marks at the Bankatwa range of the forest.

4 HELD FOR STEALING PRIVATE BUS IN DELHI

	Max	Min		Max	Min
Ahmedabad	41	27	Mumbai	33	29
Bhopal	39	25	Panaji	33	28
Jaipur	39	27	Patna	34	23
Amritsar	38	22	Lucknow	40	25
Chennai	33	28	Port Blair	32	25
Kolkata	35	26	Imphal	28	16
Srinagar	25	11	Chandigarh	38	21

Talks to build national Oppn front soon, claims Raut

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Mumbai

SHIV Sena leader Sanjay Raut on Sunday said that talks to form a grand alliance of Opposition parties at the national level will begin in the coming days. Raut said he has discussed the issue with Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar.

"There is a need to have a strong alliance of opposition parties in the country. But there can't be an alliance without the Congress party. It will be the soul. Leadership can be decided through consultations," Raut told reporters.

"The Maha Vikas aghadi (MVA) in Maharashtra was formed after three ideologically different parties (Shiv Sena, NCP and Congress) came together and the leadership was unanimously given to Uddhav Thackeray. This is an ideal alliance, which is working fine," he said.

The Congress has done well in Assam, Kerala and Tamil Nadu in the recent Assembly elections. But it did not win a single seat in West Bengal and this is not

good. The party needs to be strengthened further, he said.

The Congress is a pan-India party, whether in government or in opposition, he said. "I discussed these issues with NCP president Sharad Pawar, but since he is indisposed, he is in Mumbai. Talks of forming an alliance of opposition parties will start in a few days," the Sena's Rajya Sabha member said. Replying to questions on Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnavis criticising the Maharashtra government on its handling of Covid -19 pandemic, Raut said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has responded to Fadnavis's allegations by saying that the state was doing well.

"Even the Supreme Court has taken note of the state government's work. Maharashtra is fighting against the virus with all its might and CM Uddhav Thackeray and all his cabinet colleagues need to be complimented," Raut said.

WAIT IS OVER

He will take oath of office today; Sonowal may head back as Union minister

Himanta is BJP's pick for Assam CM

BJP's Chief Minister-designate Himanta Biswa Sarma (left) being greeted by former Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal in Guwahati | PTI

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Guwahati

PUTING an end to the speculations over who will lead Assam, the BJP on Sunday named party strongman Himanta Biswa Sarma as its choice for the state's chief minister.

The decks were cleared on Sunday after Sarma was elected as the leader of the BJP legislature party in the presence of the party's central observers including Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, BL Santhosh, Arun Singh and Vaijyanta Panda. Sarma's name was proposed by the outgoing CM Sarbananda Sonowal and seconded by BJP state chief and MLA Ranjeet Kumar Dass and MLA Nandita Garlosa.

"As no other name was proposed, Sarma was elected unanimously as the BJP legislature party leader," Tomar said.

Later, in the evening, Sarma along with Sonowal and other leaders of the BJP-led alliance met Governor Jagdish Mukhi and staked a claim to form the government. Sarma as well as some ministers will be administered the oath of office and secrecy on Monday. Sonowal tendered his resignation to the Governor but he asked him to continue in office till the new government is installed.

Speaking after a meeting of the NDA legislature party, Sonowal highlighted how the BJP government has managed to restore peace in the state.

"The government had managed to restore peace and ensure progress and security. People's faith and trust in us increased as evident from this victory. Given his long experience, I am confident Mr Himanta Biswa Sarma will be able to deliver," Sonowal said

Earlier in the day, Sarma visited Sonowal and later, both arrived together in the same vehicle to attend the BJP legislature party meeting. On Saturday, the duo had flown to Delhi in a chartered flight after being summoned by the party's central leaders who met them separately before meeting them together at party chief JP Nadda's residence. With Sonowal's stepping down as the chief minister, there is now a question mark over his political future. However, sources within the BJP said Sonowal would be taken back to Delhi and appointed as a minister.

A Rajya Sabha seat is lying vacant after Biswajit Daimary had resigned to contest the Assembly elections. Sources said Sonowal would be asked to fill that seat.

"He has been a very successful CM. The BJP central leadership sent him to Assam in 2016 on deputation to head the government after he had acquired knowledge as a Union minister," sources said.

Sarma helped the BJP expand in the Northeast

PRASANTA MAZUMDAR @Guwahati

BJP strongman Himanta Biswa Sarma who will take over as the chief minister of Assam on Monday is the architect of the BJP's success not just in Assam, but the entire Northeast.

It has been a long wait for Sarma, who was once the blue-eyed boy of Tarun Gogoi, the former Congress CM of the state. Within the Congress, he was seen as a natural successor to Gogoi. However, the two had fallen out with each other following Gogoi's US-educated son Gaurav's emergence in the Assam's political landscape.

Sarma eventually left Congress after being upset about not being given the place that he deserved despite having won the support of a large majority of the party MLAs during the 2014-15 dissent within the party.

The BJP did not commit the same mistake. It has rewarded him for all that he has achieved for the party.

Born into a highly-educated family on February 1, 1969 in Jorhat, Sarma had started his political career with the All Assam Students' Union (AASU). He served the Cotton College Union Society as its general secretary for three terms in 1988-89, 1989-90 and 1991-1992. He is a post-graduate in political science, an LLB and a PhD. Former CM Hiteswar Saikia could see the spark in Sarma and asked him to join the Congress in the first half of 1990s.

Noting his ability as a minister and his political wisdom, observers say Sarma should have become the Assam CM long back. After falling out with Gogoi, he had joined the BJP in 2015. After the 2016 polls, the BJP formed a non-Congress conglomerate of political parties called North East Democratic Alliance and made him its convenor.

He has not only contributed to the prowess of the BJP in Assam but also consolidated the party's organisational base across the region.

A master election strategist, who is widely known for his political acumen, he was instrumental in the BJP's victory in Assam, Tripura, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh. Sarma had played a key role in toppling the Peoples' Party of the Arunachal government in 2016 when 33 of its 43 MLAs, led by CM Pema Khandu, joined the BJP. He did not stop there. The next year, he helped the BJP form a government for the first time in Manipur.

THE MOST POWERFUL POLITICO IN THE REGION

Considered by many to be the most powerful politician of the entire Northeast region, 52-year-old Sarma is equally revered by supporters for his capabilities and reviled by critics for being over-ambitious

GST waiver for jabs will jack up cost, says FM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi/Kolkata

FINANCE Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Sunday virtually ruled out exempting Covid vaccines, medicines and oxygen concentrators from GST, saying such an exemption will make the lifesaving items costlier for consumers as manufacturers will not be able to offset the taxes paid on inputs.

Currently, domestic supplies and commercial imports of vaccines attract a 5 per cent Goods and Services Tax (GST), while Covid drugs and oxygen concentrators attract a 12 per cent levy.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has demanded that the GST and otehr taxes be dropped on all life-saving medicines and equipement.

Meanwhile, for the fourth consecutive day since the start of her third term as West Bengal chief minister, Mamata Banerjee wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. In her Sunday's letter, she requested exemption of customs duty, GST and other taxes for medical equipment that many individuals or organisers want to donate to the state government in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic.

In three earlier letters, Mamata had requested the Centre to ensure free universal vaccination, increase allocation of medical oxygen for West Bengal and essential medicines required for the treatment of Covid-19 patients. In a reply to Bengal CM's letter on Saturday, Union Health minister Harsh Vardhan said the Centre issued maximum allocation of medical oxygen for West Bengal.

In the latest letter, Mamata said, "A large number of organisations and individuals have come forward to donate oxygen concentrators, cylinders, cryogenic storage tanks, tankers and tan containers and Covid related rugs. Many have approached the state government co consider exemption of these items from customs duty/SGST/CGST/IGST. As the rate structure falls under the purview of the central government, I would request that these items may be exempted from such duties and taxes."

TMC workers help cremate BJP leader as saffron camp looks away

PRANAB MONDAL @ Kolkata

TRINAMOOL Congress functionaries came forward to cremate the body of a BJP leader, who died of cardiac arrest in West Bengal's East Burdwan district, after nobody from the saffron camp responded to repeated pleas by his wife.

Sixty-year-old Anup Banerjee, who was the BJP's booth president, died on Friday. His wife Reena stood guard beside his body overnight. Her repeated pleas to the local BJP workers to help cremate him fell on deaf ears as they suspected Banerjee died of Covid-19.

On Saturday afternoon, a local TMC leader Budun Sheikh instructed the party workers to go and help the family. They carried Banerjee's body and cremated it.

"It was around 1 pm when my husband died. He had no symptoms of Covid-19. He was suffering from physical ailments and had succumbed to a massive cardiac arrest," Reena said.

"I informed the BJP's local leaders and functionaries with whom my husband worked hard in the Assembly elections. Initially, they said they will come soon. Bu no one turned up," she said. "I then heard a rumour that my husband died of Covid. I couldn't arrange a vehicle to take him to the crematorium. It was stormy night with heavy downpour. I had to spend the night with his body," Reena said.

EXPRESS READ

Terrorist hideout busted in J-K

Srinagar: Security forces on Sunday unearthed a terrorist hideout in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir, leading to the recovery of 19 hand grenades and scuttling of a terrorist plan to disturb peace in the border district by carrying out grenade attacks, a defence spokesman said

Uranium haul: NIA takes over probe

New Delhi: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) took over the probe into the case involving the seizure of 7.1 kg of "natural uranium" worth `21.30 crore in Mumbai. The anti-terror agency took over the case from the Mumbai Police in pursuance of an order issued by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs

AMU V-C's brother among faculty Covid fatalities

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ACCORDING to the V-C only three doctors are under treatment, while others have recovered. However, sources said at least 16 people, including faculty members, were currently under treatment in the Covid ward of Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College.

The first death of a professor of AMU was recorded on April 20 when the former proctor and dean student welfare professor Jamshed Ali Siddiqui passed away. Earlier, Medical Department Chairman Professor Shadab Ahmed Khan (58) and Computer Department Professor Rafiqul Zaman Khan (55) also succumbed to Covid-19. Umar Farooq, brother of Vice-Chancellor Mansoor also died of Covid-19. Farooq was a former member of the University Court and a member of the Mohammedan Educational Conference.

"The university is deeply concerned with the death of its faculty members, including retired teachers and other employees," Omar Peerzada, Public Relations Officer of the university told TNIE. However, Peerzada said that the list of deceased being circulated on social media includes the names of several faculty members were residing outside Aligarh.

"Non-Covid deaths are also included on this list. Our healthcare staff and frontline workers, along with the administration, are working day in and day out to combat the pandemic. These are challenging times for everyone but we will win," Peerzada said.

According to the list being circulated on social media, 43 professors from AMU have succumbed to the infection in the last few days. TNIE could not independently verify the list.

Meanwhile, Professor Feza Tabassum Azmi of the Department of Business Administration at AMU said, "We have lost a number of colleagues during the past few days. It is indeed distressing. Only God knows what has really happened but what we know is that not everyone died in the medical college. Some staff members died at home while some were not even in Aligarh. It would be wrong to put the blame on the medical college."

"The team of doctors did a commendable job during the first wave, too. Perhaps the sheer number of cases in the second wave has been overwhelming. Our medical college is catering to not just the university but the entire Aligarh district," she said.

After over 3 years, RJD chief Lalu Prasad makes partial return to active politics

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ Patna

AFTER a gap of more than three years, the Rashtriya Janata Dal supremo Lalu Prasad Yadav, who has been serving a jail term, made his partial return to politics on Sunday. Lalu held a virtual meet with the party's senior leaders and lawmakers.

He called on the leaders to serve the people who are suffering amid a rise in Covid cases.

In March 2018, he was sentenced to 14 years in jail in connection with fodder scam. Last month, a court had granted him bail. The RJD leader is presently staying at his elder daughter's house in Delhi.

Lalu was unwell and could not speak for long. His blood oxygen level was a bit below the normal. He did not make any political statements, but called upon party workers and leasders to render their services to the people in these tough

times.

"Lakhs of people have died due to Covid-19. There is a lot of destructions and commotion all around. At such a time, it is your duty to go to your area and serve your people," Lalu told his party leaders.

Though, it was anticipated that he will share some political strategies to deal with the NDA regime in the state, he remained guarded.

"It shows how genuinely he is concerned with the people of party above politics," remarked a senior RJD leader, adding that being with the people in times of crisis has always been an integral and important part of Lalu Prasad's politics.

"Gradually, he will return to the Bihar politics in full form to take on the failed NDA regime", said a senior leader, preferring anonymity.

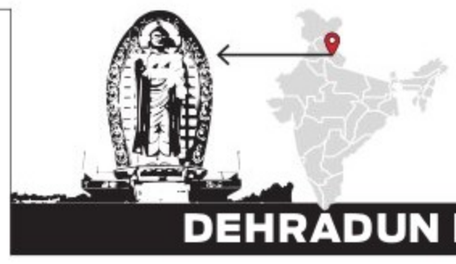
In his typical tone and tenor, Lalu assured the party leaders and functionaries that he will soon be among them once he fully recovers.

Later, RJD state president Jagdanand Singh said it was not a meeting to chalk out any political strategies. Rather, it was for Lalu to meet the party leaders and funationaries after a long time.

"There is no other leader in Bihar, who understands the pain of the poor better than Lalu Prasad. He told party leaders how to help the poor amid the pandemic".

Summer vacation extended till June 30

Uttarakhand government on Saturday extended the summer vacation for school by 18 days in light of the surge in Covid-19 cases. The government had earlier announced that all schools will be shut for summer holidays till June 12. On Saturday, it extended the school closure till June 30. The hill state registered 8,390 cases on Saturday, taking the total number of active cases to 71,174. Uttarakhand has lost 3,548 lives since the first case was detected in March 2020 in the state. Dehradun district recorded the most deaths at 1,997. Nainital comes second with 555 deaths.



VINEET UPADHYAY
Our correspondent in Dehradun
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DEHRADUN DIARY

BJP MLA Mahendra Bhatt tests positive for Covid

Mahendra Bhatt, the BJP MLA from Uttarakhand's Badrinath, who last year said that those who drink cow urine regularly are safe from Covid-19, has tested positive for the infection. He informed the public about his infection through a Facebook post. "No matter how much precautions you take, this Corona is leaving no one. My driver got infected. I gave my samples for testing. It came back positive. Will stay in Pokhari, away from my dear ones, until I recover," he said. In March 2020, amid the first wave of Covid-19, Bhatt said if one drinks cow urine on empty stomach after taking a bath, it annihilates all kinds of viruses in the body, not just the coronavirus. Supporters wished him well on social media. Many mentioned his cow urine statement, without mocking him, and asserted that the threat is real.

Travel agents, drivers struggling amid Covid

With the Char Dham Yatra suspended amid a raging second wave of Covid-19, hundreds of travel agencies are feeling the burn. Owners of many agencies and drivers are taking up manual labor and farming to earn a livelihood. Sundar Singh Pawar, who owns a travel agency, has returned to his village and has taken up farming. "We have a total of 40 taxis and got 50 bookings for Char Dhan Yatra. After the yatra was cancelled and out of 20 drivers I hired 18 had to be told to go. I came back to my village in Jakhan area of Dehradun." Almost all travel agencies have had to ask their drivers to take indefinite leave without pay until the situation improves. Taxi unions, owners of travel agencies and other stakeholders are planning to request the state government to waive off taxes for at least two years.

Ayurveda, homeo docs to help with Covid care

Uttarakhand state government has decided to staff Ayurveda and homeopathy doctors in the district Covid-19 control rooms across the state. Officials of the state health department said Ayurveda and homeopathy doctors of the Ayush department will be deployed to support the health department in its fight against the Covid pandemic. The state government is also planning to hire more Ayurveda and homeopathy doctors on a contract basis and establish more ICUs at Ayurveda hospitals with Rs 5.88 crore sanctioned by the state government to ramp up Ayush facilities in the hill state

SLOVAKIA EYES USING RUSSIA'S SPUTNIK V, AWAITS RESULTS
Bratislava: Slovakia is set to discuss possible use of Russia's Sputnik V vaccine with Moscow after it was successfully tested in a Hungarian lab. Slovakian Health Minister Vladimir Lengvarsky said he will talk with his country's experts and "the Russian side about further developments."

S AFRICA DETECTS 4 CASES OF COVID VARIANT FOUND IN INDIA
Johannesburg: South African Health Minister Zweli Mkhize has said four cases of B.1.617.2, the Indian variant of coronavirus have been detected in the country. However, there was no cause for panic as all such cases were quarantined, he said.

US Navy seizes weapons shipment in Arabian Sea

Assault rifles, machine guns seized. It was likely bound for Yemen

DUBAI

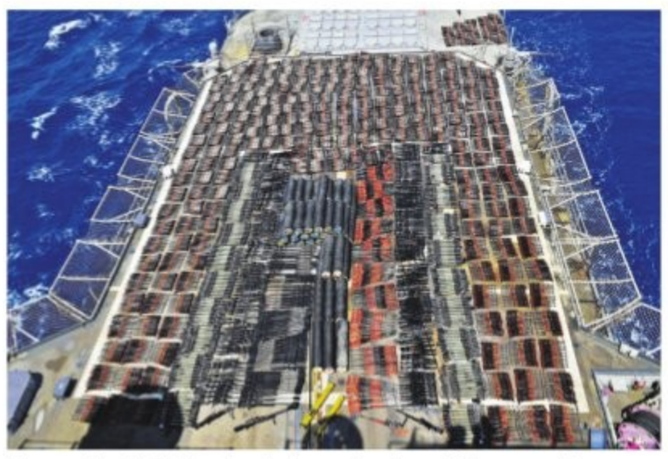
THE US Navy announced Sunday it seized an arms shipment of thousands of assault weapons, machines guns and sniper rifles hidden aboard a ship in the Arabian Sea, apparently bound for Yemen to support the country's Houthi rebels. An American defence official told The Associated Press that the Navy's initial investigation found the vessel came from Iran, again tying the Islamic Republic to arming the Houthis despite a United Nations arms embargo.

Iran's mission to the UN did not immediately respond to a request for comment, though Tehran has denied in the past giving the rebels weapons.

The seizure, one of several amid the years-long war in Yemen, comes as the US and others try to end a conflict that spawned one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters. The arms shipment, described as sizeable, shows that the war may still have far to run.

The guided-missile cruiser USS Monterey discovered the weapons aboard what the Navy described as a stateless dhow, a traditional Mideast sailing ship, in an operation that began Thursday in the northern reaches of the Arabian Sea off Oman and Pakistan. Sailors boarded the vessel and found the weapons, most wrapped in green plastic, below deck.

When laid out on the deck of the Monterey, the scale of the find came into focus. Sailors found nearly 3,000 Chinese Type 56 assault rifles, a variant of the Kalashnikov. They recovered hundreds of other heavy machine guns and sniper rifles, as well as dozens of advanced, Russian-made anti-tank guided missiles. The shipments also included several hundred rocket-propelled grenade launchers and optical sights for weapons.



Weapons that the US Navy described as coming from a hidden arms shipment on a stateless dhow seen aboard the guided-missile cruiser USS Monterey | AP/PTI

The Navy's Mideast-based 5th Fleet did not identify where the weapons originated, nor where they were going. However, an American defence official said the weapons resembled those of other shipments interdicted bounded for the Houthis.

Based on interviews with the crew and material investigated on board, the sailors determined the vessel came from Iran, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the ongoing investigation.

"After all illicit cargo was removed, the dhow was assessed for seaworthiness, and after questioning, its crew was provided food and water before being released," the 5th Fleet said in a statement.

The seizure marks just the latest in the Arabian Sea or Gulf of Aden involving weapons likely bound to Yemen. The seizures began in 2016 and have continued intermittently throughout the war, which has seen the Houthis fire ballistic missiles and use drones later linked to Iran. Yemen is awash with small arms that have been smuggled into poorly controlled ports over years of conflict.

This recent seizure appeared to be among the biggest. Tim Michetti, an investigative researcher who studies the illicit weapon trade, also said the shipment bore similarities to the others.

"The unique blend of materiel recovered by the USS Monterey appears to be consistent with the materiel from previous interdictions, which have been linked to Iran," he said. Yemen's war began in September 2014, when the Houthis seized Sanaa and began a march south to try to seize the entire country. Saudi Arabia, along with the United Arab Emirates and other countries, entered the war alongside Yemen's internationally recognized government in March 2015. Iran backed the Houthis, who harass Saudi Arabia with missile fire and drone attacks. *AP*

ASIA MATTERS

AFGHANISTAN

Toll in Kabul school bombing soars to 50

Kabul: Grieving families buried their dead on Sunday following a horrific bombing at a girls' school in the Afghan capital that killed 50 people, many of them pupils aged between 11 and 15. The number of wounded in Saturday's attack climbed to more than 100, said Interior Ministry spokesman Tariq Arian. In Dasht-e-Barchi, families buried their dead amid angry recriminations at a government they said has failed to protect them from repeated attacks in the mostly Shiite Muslim neighbourhood. "The government reacts after the incident, it doesn't do anything before it," said Mohammad Baqir, Alizada, 41, who had gathered to bury his niece, Latifa, a Grade 11 student of the Syed Al-Shahda school, where three explosions had taken took place outside the entrance. AP

PAKISTAN

Policeman killed as terrorists attack patrol team

Peshawar: A Pakistani police official was killed when some unidentified terrorists opened fire on a patrol vehicle in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province on Sunday. The terrorists attacked the police van while it was doing a routine patrolling on Indus highway in Lakki Marwat district, SHO local police station Naveed Nawaz said. While Assistant Sub Inspector (ASI) Muhammad Shah was killed in the attack, two terrorists were gunned down in the retaliatory firing, he said. PTI

SINGAPORE

Edu foundation sends 500 O_2 concentrators to India

Singapore: Singapore-based education foundation, Global Schools Foundation (GSF), has dispatched more than 500 oxygen concentrators to India to save the lives of Covid patients. GSF reached out to Sewa International — a huge network of social initiatives across India — to tap their deep local resources and get these concentrators to small towns and villages deep inside the country. These concentrators are in addition to the first shipment of 200 oxygen cylinders sent on an urgent basis as part of a larger consignment on board Indian Navy warship Airavat. Atul Temurnikar, Chairman of GSF, said, "We are saving lives in India by sending life-saving equipment such as oxygen concentrators and cylinders. They can be used in hospitals or at venues of social organisations or community centres." PTI

Key suspect in Nasheed attack arrested: Cops

COLOMBO

THE Maldives police on Sunday said they have arrested a person who is believed to be the prime suspect in an explosion that critically wounded the country's former president and was blamed on Muslim extremists.

Police now have in their custody three of the four suspects in Thursday's blast targeting former President Mohamed Nasheed, who is recovering in a hospital after multiple surgeries.

Police did not give details of the latest suspect or his background but in a text message confirmed that they believe he is the person whose pictures were released Saturday as authorities sought public assistance for identification. The remaining suspect remains at large.

Officials blamed Islamic extremists for the attack. *AP*

Why are people protesting across Colombia?

Thousands of Colombians have protested across the country against a government they feel has long ignored their needs, allowed corruption to run rampant and is so out of touch that it proposed tax increases during the Covid pandemic.

However, violence during some demonstrations has claimed the lives of 26 people, including a police officer, and over 800 people injured, as per government figures.

Human rights organisations have denounced numerous police abuses and give a higher death toll.

Despite lockdown orders, protesters have turned out in more than half of Colombia's municipalities since last week for mostly peaceful protests against the administration of President Ivan Duque.

Why have some protests turned violent?

- The govt contends that rebel groups have infiltrated protests and drug-trafficking enterprises are subsidising demonstrations. Duque has even classified the actions as 'low-intensity terrorism.'
- Leaders of demonstrations say security forces have been exceedingly violent and the government is stigmatizing protesters.
- The epicentre of demonstrations and violence has been Cali, where movements of peasants and Indigenous and Afro Latino people converge.
- In Cali, there is a 'historical accumulation of social discontent, anger and rebellion,' said sociologist Rosembert Ariza at the National University of Colombia.

How has the govt responded?

- Defence Minister Diego Molano said security forces have tried to protect those who are peacefully demonstrating as well as those who chose to stay home.
- The military has sometimes joined police since Duque on May 1 signed off on armed forces' involvement until 'the acts of serious alteration of public order cease.' That allows mayors to request the army's presence in urban areas, a move questioned by human rights observers.
- "International (human rights) standards require limiting as much as possible the use of the (military) to control internal disturbances. The soldiers are trained for armed conflict, not for citizen security," said Jos' Miguel Vivanco, director for the Americas at Human Rights Watch.

What led to the protests?

- The protests started on April 28 over proposed tax increases on public services, fuel, wages and pensions.
- It has now morphed into a demand for govt to pay longstanding debts to the most vulnerable in society. Though the administration withdrew the tax reform, protests have continued and grown as reports emerged of police violence, deaths and disappearances.
- Protesters have at times erected roadblocks that officials say have led to food shortage, prevented vaccine deliveries and blocked ambulances.

What is the human rights situation?

- International observers have urged Duque's govt to respect human rights and guarantee people's right to protest.
- Martha Hurtado, spokeswoman for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, said the organisation is deeply alarmed as it received information that in Cali, the 'police opened fire on protesters, killing and wounding several people.'

Report by AP
Pics by AP/PTI

EXPRESS READ

Nepal PM Oli to seek vote of confidence today

Kathmandu: Nepal's embattled Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli will seek a vote of confidence in the House of Representatives on Monday to prove that he enjoys majority support in the lower house after CPN (Maoist Centre) led by Pushpakamal Dahal "Prachanda" withdrew support to his government. Oli will try to win the confidence of the 275-member house to prove that he enjoys majority support, aiming to consolidate his grip in the party. The ruling CPN-UML has issued a whip to all its lawmakers, urging them to cast their votes in Oli's favour. PTI

Boris Johnson calls Covid recovery summit

London: UK PM Boris Johnson has called a Covid recovery summit to bring together leaders of the devolved Scottish and Welsh governments, following election results that have renewed calls for another independence referendum in Scotland. First Minister Nicola Sturgeon led pro-independence Scottish National Party (SNP) won, falling short of a clear majority in the Scottish Parliament Holyrood by just one seat as results from Thursday's elections became clear on Sunday. It led to Sturgeon declaring the vote as a mandate for a second independence referendum, the first held in 2014 which went against independence. PTI

'Chinese scientists probed weaponising coronaviruses in 2015'

LONDON/MELBOURNE

CHINESE military scientists allegedly investigated weaponising coronaviruses five years before the Covid pandemic and may have predicted a World War III fought with biological weapons, as per media reports referring to documents obtained by the US State Department.

According to 'The Sun' newspaper in the UK, quoting reports first released by 'The Australian', the 'bombshell' documents obtained by the US State Department reportedly show the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) commanders making the sinister prediction.

US officials allegedly obtained the papers written by military scientists and senior Chinese public health officials in 2015 as part of their own investigation into the origins of Covid.

Chinese scientists described SARS coronaviruses, of which Covid is one example, as presenting a 'new era of genetic weapons'. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses, several of which cause respiratory diseases in humans, ranging from a common cold to Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

The PLA papers referenced seem to fantasise that a bioweapon attack could cause the "enemy's medical system to collapse". It references work by US Air Force colonel Michael J Ainscough, who predicted World War III may be fought with bioweapons.

The paper also includes musing that SARS 'which hit China in 2003', could have been a man-made bioweapon deliberately unleashed by "terrorists".

They reportedly boasted the viruses could be 'artificially manipulated into an emerging human disease virus, then weaponised and unleashed in a way never seen before.' *PTI*

Nazi ideas persist, Putin tells Red Square parade

Russian Army officers march towards Red Square during the Victory Day military parade in Moscow | AP/PTI

MOSCOW

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin marked the anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe with a speech warning that Nazi beliefs remain strong.

Speaking to the annual military parade on Moscow's Red Square, Putin on Sunday decried 'attempts to rewrite history, to justify traitors and criminals, on whose hands lies the blood of hundreds of thousands of peaceful people.'

"Unfortunately, many of the ideologies of the Nazis, those who were obsessed with the delusional theory of their exclusiveness, are again trying to be put into service," he said, without citing specifics.

The parade included more than 190 military vehicles traversing the square, ranging from the renowned WWII-era T-34 tank to the hulking eight-axle Yars mobile ICBM launchers.

The anniversary of Nazi Germany's defeat, which Russia calls Victory Day, is the country's most significant secular holiday, commemorating the Red Army's military feats and the vast suffering of civilians. *AP*

Fire at Syrian oil refinery extinguished after leakage

DAMASCUS (SYRIA)

FIREFIGHTERS on Sunday extinguished a blaze in a distillation unit at one of Syria's two oil refineries, Syrian state TV reported.

No one was hurt, but the fire caused some damage to the facility, a refinery official said. The TV named the cause of the fire as crude oil leakage from one of the pumping stations at the Homs Oil Refinery in the central province of Homs.

The fire came amid a series of mysterious attacks on vessels and oil facilities in Syria over the past months. The war-torn country has been suffering from fuel shortages in recent months.

The head of Homs Oil Refinery, Suleiman Mohammed, told state TV that the distillation unit that caught fire is one of four at the refinery.

Syria has another refinery near the coastal town of Banias. Both are government-run and operating. *AP*

Oz borders will stay closed indefinitely for rest of world: PM

MELBOURNE

AUSTRALIAN Prime Minister **Scott Morrison** on Sunday announced that the country's borders will remain closed indefinitely for the rest of the world to protect Australians from the outbreaks of Covid strains. Australia's borders were shut in March last year as Covid spread across the world. Only citizens and permanent residents have been allowed to enter the country under some strict Covid border rules.

On April 27, Australia suspended all direct passenger flights from India with immediate effect until May 15 due to the "very significant" spike in Covid cases there.

According to media reports here, Morrison said he "doesn't see an appetite" for Australia opening to the world at the moment, and that he intended to be 'cautious.' He further said that it was still unclear if it was safe to reopen even after the vaccination rollout completion and that he has no plans to abandon a "zero cases" target.

Morrison said that the country's borders will remain closed indefinitely for the rest of the world so as to protect Australians from the deadly outbreaks of COVID-19 strains.

"I think what we're seeing at the moment is the appreciation of the people that the pandemic is not going anywhere," Morrison said.

"All I know is once you let (COVID-19) back in again, you cannot get it out. You've crossed that threshold. We continue to roll out the vaccination programme, over the course of this year, and in the meantime, I intend to be cautious, it's in my nature,' he added.

"We have to be careful not to exchange that way of life for what everyone else has," he said.

In a later Facebook post, he warned borders would only be opened "when it is safe to do so. We still have a long way to go, and there are still many uncertainties ahead." "I think Australians want to ensure that the way we're living at the moment is maintained,' he said.

It follows Finance Minister Simon Birmingham's comments on Thursday that international borders opening was unlikely to happen soon because there has been a 'clear message' Australians do not want to 'risk Covid entering this country.' The total number of Covid cases in Australia are 29,906 and the death toll stands at 910.

A total of 2.5 million Australians have received their first dose of the Covid vaccine, according to Federal Government figures. But the government has received criticism for its slow roll-out. *PTI*

₹5,936 cr was pulled out of Indian equities in the first week of May by foreign portfolio investors amidst worries over the intense second wave of the pandemic

RAJAS KELKAR

THE MONEY AND HAPPINESS EQUATION AFTER COVID-19

More money does not necessarily translate into happiness. Many social, economic, and emotional factors contribute to being happy

RICHARD Easterlin is considered a pioneer in happiness. In the 70s, he argued in a paper that money does not necessarily translate into happiness over the long term. There has been a multitude of arguments and counterarguments for years later. Primarily, they were a part of ideological warfare between the socialists and capitalists.

Finland remains the happiest country globally and India among the worst in terms of ranking in the World Happiness Index, even below Pakistan and Bangladesh. By the size of the economy, the United States, being the largest economy globally, should have been the happiest country. There are 17 countries ahead of it. China, the second biggest in the world, is at 84th position. Considering the rapid growth in China's economy over the past three decades, it should have been among the top countries in the Happiness index. The per capita wealth has grown the fastest in that country. Over the past eight years, the Happiness Index records show that China barely moved eight places up. That shows more money does not necessarily translate into happiness. A lot of other social, economic and emotional factors contribute to staying happy.

Since the advent of the first COVID virus strain in China in 2019, our behaviour has changed. According to the World Economic Forum estimates, women alone have lost over $800 billion world over in income. That is in addition to trillions of dollars of losses that significant economies have taken around the world. Governments are borrowing extensively to meet the needs of ordinary citizens and provide for them during these times.

Markets remain optimistic, as usual

There is no dramatic collapse in the stock market. In a crisis, stock markets crash and gold prices rally. These factors indicate that the country's financial markets are looking forward to a world that would emerge. Markets continue to remain optimistic, as usual

AMIT BANDRE

At an individual level, things have not affected the rich so much. However, a country like India faces the risk of more people moving below the poverty line due to the loss of income. A primary need to combat the pandemic is social distancing. However, in a country like India, where people live in packed houses, social distancing may be a luxury. That is not a happy situation.

While there is no empirical evidence yet, it appears that people are coming to terms with the situation. A lot of you have started to value what you have got. 'Less is more' is fast becoming a catchphrase. You can live with less food, less outdoor entertainment, fewer parties and gathering and less shopping. Human relationships are receiving more importance than before. Parents are bonding with children, and siblings are busy reaching out to each other. Husbands and wives have given their relationships another chance and a reboot.

The pandemic has spared neither the rich nor the poor. As a result, we can assume that more money need not translate into happiness for some time to come. It may be a good thing that the importance of money has diminished a bit.

However, it will continue to be a pursuit.

The trend in the financial market is a case in point. As India's numbers soar, there is no dramatic collapse in the stock market. There is no dramatic surge in gold prices either. In a crisis, stock markets crash and gold prices rally.

These factors indicate that the country's financial markets are looking forward to a world that would emerge sooner rather than later from the pandemic. Markets continue to remain optimistic, as usual.

Things to do

The only way India and the world can emerge out of the pandemic is through vaccination. As an investor, you may want to track the progress. "Our analysis shows Delhi, Chennai, and Mumbai are doing well in terms of vaccinations and are recording strong recovery rates. As such, they may return to normalcy sooner," said Elara Securities in a note last week.

HSBC, a global bank, is cautious in its views but suggests that you could view any significant market fall in Indian equities positively. Indian shares have not reacted sharply despite a surge in COVID-19 cases due to the experience of last year and the fact that companies are better prepared.

You may have to stop the pursuit of happiness by chasing money. Instead, you make money to meet your life goals. The experience of 2020 shows that stock markets have a way to bounce back from a sharp fall. You need to stay invested and stay safe.

(The author is editor-in-chief at www.moneyminute.in)

MONEY-WISE

HOW TO PREPARE YOUR FINANCES FOR COVID-19

WHAT is the financial preparedness that you should have for the Corona Virus—the Chinese pandemic? Let us start at the very beginning.

Do a quick audit of your name in all the legal and financial documents. Your PAN, Aadhar, Passport—are three of your main legal documents. Make sure that your name is the same in all these documents. This is more true for women—maiden name or married name—make sure it is the same in all.

Then take a look at the medical insurance that you have. Make sure that you have adequate cover. I would not suggest that you take a special Covid insurance, just take a big enough medical insurance, a top up insurance, and a super top up insurance. These are very technical terms, I would suggest that you consult a good adviser and take an insurance policy. Check your life insurance and decide on how much you need. If you need term insurance of ₹3 crore and already have ₹1 crore term insurance, take a ₹2 crore term plan. If you are already 55 years of age, you may not need any more term insurance—so get rid of the same, right now.

Check all the NOMINATIONS and make sure that they are up-to-date and current. When a person is young (say 22) they may have made their mother the nominee. Once a person gets married they should make their spouse the nominee. Many people forget to do this and suddenly, when the person dies, they come to realize that the nominee has died 10 years ago!

FINANCIAL ADVICE

PV SUBRAMANYAM

writes at www.subramoney.com and has authored the best seller 'Retire Rich - Invest ₹ 40 a day'

It is necessary to keep all your Nominations current and updated.

Anybody who owns a piece of Real Estate should make sure that they have made a will. In most parts of the country, transferring Real Estate after a person's death is a big task, and has to be done using a lawyer. Having a NOTARISED will goes a long way in making the task easy for the next of kin. The topic of being "prepared for Covid" is very big. Surely, having multiple holders as "Either or survivor" and many nominees is going to be very useful as couple deaths, and multiple deaths in one family is getting to be very common. To sum up, keep documents, nominations, and your will up to date.

LIC relaxes documentation norms in order to speed up claim settlements

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

WITH the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic claiming a large number of lives, the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has announced that it is further relaxing the requirements for its claim-settlement procedures in order to help facilitate speedy settle of claims.

These steps were taken after receiving a series of representation from the policy holders.

According to a statement issued by the LIC this week, since people are struggling to get death certificates, the agency has allowed the submission of alternative proofs of death in order to facilitate speedy settlement in the case of death claims. In the place of municipal death certificates, claimants can now submit documents such as "death certificate, discharge summary/death summary containing a clear date and time of death issued by govt/ESI/armed forces/corporate hospitals, and countersigned by LIC class I officers or development officers of 10 years standing along with cremation/burial certificate or authentic identifying receipt issued by the relevant authority," the notification said.

This has to be submitted along with a cremation/burial certificate or authentic identifying receipt issued by the relevant authority. However, it added, in other cases, municipal death certificate will be required as earlier.

Apart from this, the agency has relaxed a few other related norms too. For instance, in the case of Annuities with return of capital options, production of life certificates is waived for annuities due up to October 31, 2021. It has also permitted the acceptance of life certificates sent through emails and introduced life certificate procurement through video calls.

"To address the difficulties experienced by policyholders in submitting documents required for claim settlement in the servicing branch, submission of documents has been allowed in any nearby LIC office for due maturity/survival benefit claims," the statement added.Policyholders can also log on to its website www.licindia.in to avail of its services.

The LIC has also relaxed working norms for its employees, keeping in mind the lockdown introduced in various places across India.

To address the difficulties experienced... in submitting documents required for claim settlement in the servicing branch, submission of documents has been allowed in any nearby LIC office —LIC

EXPRESS READ

FuelBuddy acquires MyPterolPump

New Delhi: App-based fuel delivery platform FuelBuddy on Sunday said it has acquired Bengaluru-based on-demand fuel delivery startup MyPetrolPump, which will provide it access to new geographies and customers. With this acquisition, FuelBuddy will have over 100 refuellers under management, servicing 30 cities and all market segments.

'Economy likely to rebound by Q4 FY22'

New Delhi: Bandhan Bank Managing Director & CEO Chandra Shekhar Ghosh is hopeful that the economy will rebound by the third and fourth quarters of the current fiscal, enabling the lender to meet its targets. He said the bank had exercised caution amid the COVID-19 pandemic and made additional provisioning in the last quarter of 2020-21, news agency PTI reported.

Vaccination drive, Q4 earnings to drive market sentiment this week

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

SUPPORTED by the RBI's liquidity measures for Covid-hit sectors, better than expected Q4FY21 corporate earnings and global factors such as USA's decision to waive intellectual property rights on vaccines, India's equity markets ended on a positive note last week despite the country reporting an average daily count of 4 lakh Covid-19 cases.

The BSE Sensex climbed 424.11 points to 49,206.47 and the Nifty was up 192.05 points at 14,823.15 during the week.

Going forward this week, experts believe investors will closely watch upcoming Q4 results—165 companies will declare their earnings this week. Investors will also keep an eye on India's vaccination drive that is expected to pick up in coming weeks after falling to below 20 lakh doses per day recently. While these two factors may help the market move forward, the risk of a prolonged pandemic and concerns over a possible national lockdown can act as a drag.

"Going ahead, markets are likely to remain range-bound with bouts of volatility. The interplay of resurgence in COVID-19 cases and the pace of vaccination would decide the trajectory of economic recovery going forward," Siddhartha Khemka, Head-Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services said.

Ajit Mishra, VP-Research, Religare Broking noted that an improvement in the domestic COVID situation is critical for any sustainable move up, because otherwise, the rebound may fizzle out.

Analysts expect the NSE Nifty to trade in the range of 14500-15000. "The market would be optimistic if the index stays above the 14,500 level, but if it traded below these levels, it would pull the index even lower. Strong resistance is at 14950-15050 on the higher side, although it may regain the strength above 15000," noted Gaurav Garg, Head-Research, CapitalVia Global Research.

Sameet Chavan, Chief Analyst-Technical and Derivatives, Angel Broking, pointed out, "Till the time we see the index coming out of its current congestion zone, such boredom is likely to continue. Thus, it's better not to trade aggressively in index and carrying overnight positions is strictly avoided".

TIE-UP

Muthoot Fin to offer personal loans to salaried

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

MUTHOOT Finance Limited announced earlier this week that it is starting a collaboration with fintech start-up NIRA as part of its strategy to expand its presence in the digital market. Under the tie-up, salaried customers will be able to avail a personal loan of up to ₹1 lakh from Muthoot Finance through the NIRA app, downloadable from the Google's Play store.

NIRA is a Bengaluru-based fintech company offering small ticket personal loans to salaried workers—its borrowers have incomes starting at as low as ₹12,000 per month..

Commenting on the development, Pradeep, Head of Personal Loan Department, Muthoot Finance said, "We are excited to have this tie-up to enhance our personal loan growth with quality. Muthoot Finance is also aggressively moving towards an end-to-end digital process, and this tie-up is one of the initiatives in the same direction." Officials said that the partnership will help Muthoot Finance build its unsecured lending book

Rohit Sen, CEO, NIRA added, "We are delighted to add Muthoot as a partner in our roster of funders. Muthoot is a trusted brand Pan-India, and trust is a vital ingredient in financial services. This partnership bolsters our mission of providing accessible formal credit at affordable rates".

MARKET LISTING

Fincare Small Finance Bank files IPO documents

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

FINCARE Small Finance Bank has filed preliminary papers for a planned ₹1,330 crore initial public offering (IPO) with capital market regulator SEBI.

The IPO comprises a fresh issue of equity shares of the bank worth 1330 crore and an offer for sale aggregating up to ₹1,000 crore by the promoter entity Fincare Business Services Limited, according to the Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP) filed by the company. This offer also includes a reservation for subscription by employees.

The Small Finance Bank bank will utilise the net proceeds from the fresh issue in augmenting its Tier-1 capital base to meet future capital requirements

Draft Red Herring Prospectus

The papers say that the bank will utilise the net proceeds from the fresh issue in augmenting its Tier-1 capital base to meet future capital requirements. Furthermore, a small portion of these proceeds will be used to meeting expenses taken during the offer.

Under the terms of the RBI's final approval and guidelines for small finance banks (SFB), the lender is required to list its equity shares on the Indian stock exchanges within a period of three years from reaching a net worth of ₹500 crore.

The Bengaluru-based MFI-turned small finance bank started operations in July 2017. Before converting into a small finance bank, Fincare Small Finance Bank largely conducted its business from two entities—Disha Microfin focused on the western region and the south-focused Future Financial Services. Motilal Oswal Private Equity (PE) has also picked up a minority stake in the bank.

TODAY'S STOCK PICK

AXIS BANK

Current Price ₹716.75

Target Price ₹925

Moderation in fresh slippages, coupled with improved underwriting and an increasing retail mix, would help maintain strong credit cost control. Retail disbursements reached an all-time high during the quarter, with strong disbursements seen in Home Loans (+45% QoQ) and LAP (+51% QoQ). Total restructuring stood at 0.3% of loans. We estimate Axis Bank to deliver RoA/RoE of 1.7%/16.4% in FY23.

Disclaimer: The views and recommendations made above are that of the individual analyst or broking company, and not that of *The New Indian Express*.

— Motilal Oswal Securities Limited

SAFETY NET

GigIndia to provide ₹3 lakh health insurance to gig workers

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

Large scale job losses over the past few quarters has led to many taking up work in the rapidly expanding gig economy, but the unorganised nature of the same may leave a large majority of those workers outside the cover of the formal insurance market. GigIndia, a business-to-business gig marketplace for on-demand work completion, has announced that it will provide free Covid health insurance to active gig workers on its platform covering up to ₹3 lakh in medical expenses.

The Pune-headquartered firm said in a release that it is offering this insurance coverage to active gig workers in order to make them feel relatively secure during these challenging times. The company also said that it is initiating efforts to ensure that certified 'giggers' on its platform continue to receive projects, thereby enabling a steady income.

"The Covid Health Insurance will ensure that medical costs are covered if any gig worker tests positive for Covid-19. We are also providing financial assistance to gig workers, which will help them with essential expenditure such as hospital charges, oxygen cylinders and ventilators, among others," said Sahil Sharma, Co-founder & CEO, GigIndia.

In addition to the ₹3 lakh covid health insurance, the company has also set up an internal ₹10 lakh covid relief fund for gig workers in need, he said, noting that unlike full-time white/grey collar workers, giggers typically do not receive social security benefits.

Cricketer Sakariya loses father to Covid-19

Young Saurashtra pacer Chetan Sakariya's father Kanjibhai Sakariya died due to Covid-19 at a hospital in Bhavnagar on Sunday. He was 42 and was battling the infection. The 22-year-old Chetan played for Rajasthan Royals in this year's IPL, which was suspended due to the rise of Covid-19 cases in the bio-bubble.

PUTTING PIECES TOGETHER

Even as Japan extends emergency, Tokyo conducts test event for Olympics; Coe optimistic

ASSOCIATED PRESS @ Tokyo

SEATED inside Tokyo's new $1.4 billion National Stadium, Sebastian Coe again tried to reassure athletes and skeptical residents of Japan that the postponed Olympics will be safe when they open in just under 11 weeks.

An IOC member and two-time Olympic gold medalist, Coe heads track and field's world governing body World Athletics, which ran a test event on Sunday with 420 athletes — only nine of whom entered from outside Japan to compete.

The Olympics and Paralympics will draw 15,000 athletes and tens of thousands of officials, judges, media and broadcasters. They will enter a country that has essentially had its borders sealed for more than a year. "I recognise that nine athletes coming for a test event is very different from thousands of competitors coming to this city over the course of the summer months," Coe said.

He added that he was "very empathetic" with the concerns of a Japanese public that has shown in polls it overwhelmingly opposes holding the Olympics during a pandemic.

People who are against the Tokyo 2020 Olympics march to protest around National Stadium during an anti-Olympics demonstration Sunday | AP

Outside the stadium, the scene was different with about one hundred "anti-Olympic" protesters marching around the venue in central Tokyo chanting and holding posters that read: "Olympics Kill The Poor" and "Olympics — Just Stop It."

"There is an infectious disease going on and so I think they should spend more money on medical care," said Takashi Sakamoto, who attended the rally. He said he works in warehouses and cleans buildings.

"Even before the pandemic, there were people who can't buy food and became homeless, and the pandemic has made things worse," he added.

Miyuki Otomo, a retired teacher attending the rally, called the Olympics a "horrendous event" that is being pushed on the public for commercial reasons.

"If the Olympics were really a normal event, they would simply cancel it because of the pandemic."

Opposition to the Olympics seems to be rising in Japan, though the small rally belied that. An online petition asking for the games to be canceled attracted 300,000 signatures in just three days and was still climbing Sunday.

Some medical officials in Japan have also suggested the Olympics be canceled, as did the British Medical Journal in a editorial last month. The virus and its spreading variants are taxing Japan's health-care system with only 2% of the population vaccinated.

Olympic organisers have asked for 10,000 medical specialists to help during the games, but say their deployment will not affect ordinary Japanese. Despite public opposition, all signs point to the Olympics opening on July 23. Japan has officially spent $15.4 billion on the Olympics — some estimates suggest twice that — and the International Olympic Committee relies on billions in television broadcast income that has been stalled by the pandemic.

OUR IPL SPACE

BENGALURU

With Karnataka entering state-wide lockdown from Monday, police indulge in routine checking | ASHISHKRISHNA HP

MYSURU

Migrant labourers wait outside Mysuru railway station to board the special train to Danapur, Bihar | UDAYSHANKAR S

T'PURAM

A volunteer of 'Akshayapathram', an NGO, distributing free food to the elderly homeless people | BP DEEPU

CHENNAI

Ranganathan street in T Nagar sports a crowded look as the city gears up for 14-day lockdown | R SATISH BABU

AFC Cup games postponed after BFC's Covid breach

ASHIM SUNAM @ Bengaluru

THE Asian Football Confederation has postponed Group D matches of the AFC Cup, which was scheduled to start from May 14 in Male, Maldives. Also, the playoff game on Tuesday between Bengaluru FC and Club Eagles, which would have determined the fourth and final team in the group, has met the same fate.

"The AFC Cup (South) Group and Playoff Stage matches are now postponed until further notice with more information to be announced in due course," read the AFC statement.

Interestingly, AFC did not give any official reason for the postponement, but local media reports of Bengaluru players breaching the Covid-19 protocols might have led to it. Few members of the Bengaluru team were allegedly in the streets despite strict guidelines in place amidst concerns over the pandemic.

Besides, Maldives' Minister of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment, Ahmed Mahloof, also alleged that Bengaluru players flouted Covid guidelines and added that it left him disappointed. He referred to it as unacceptable behaviour and tweeted that the club should leave the country immediately. Even Bengaluru owner Parth Jindal issued an apology for the same on social media, stating that it will never happen again.

This postponement comes as a big blow for Bengaluru, who were training in Goa for the competition. They had reached Maldives on Friday for the playoff game. The club is now making arrangements to return, and stated that it will deal with the breach matter internally.

"Bengaluru FC would also like to place on record an unconditional apology for a health and safety breach, involving one member of staff and two players. This error in judgment in no way aligns or indicates otherwise stringent measures that the club has maintained," the club said in its statement. However, the postponement might have come as a relief to one of the other teams in Group D, ATK Mohun Bagan, as two of their players – Prabir Das and SK Sahil – had tested Covid positive. The Kolkata club was set to fly to Maldives on Monday.

EXPRESS READ

Boxer Mandeep wins maiden pro bout in USA

NEW DELHI: Commonwealth Games silver medal-winning Indian boxer Mandeep Jangra made a positive start in the professional circuit, beating Argentina's Luciano Ramos in his debut bout in Florida, USA. The boxer won his first professional bout against Ramos in a four-round unanimous decision in the super welterweight category on Saturday.

Bumrah can take 400 Test scalps: Ambrose

NEW DELHI: West Indies fast bowling great Curtly Ambrose says Jasprit Bumrah is "so different" from all other bowlers and has the potential to reach the 400-wicket milestone in Tests if he manages to stay fit. Ambrose said from the current Indian lot, Bumrah has impressed him the most. "He's so different than any bowler I have seen," Ambrose said on a YouTube show.

Sri Lanka may host limited-overs series against India in July

VENKATA KRISHNA B @ Chennai

THE Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is planning to send its white-ball specialists to Sri Lanka for a limited-overs series in July. It is understood that the Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC), apart from receiving an official communication from the BCCI, is also awaiting clearance from their government as it has shut borders with India, following the increasing Covid-19 numbers.

With India's Test team away in the United Kingdom during the same period, the likes of Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma, Ravindra Jadeja and Jasprit Bumrah will remain unavailable. Instead, the BCCI is looking to send its white-ball specialists for three ODIs and five T20Is. It is understood that there is a possibility that even the ODIs may be scrapped to accommodate two more T20Is keeping in mind the T20 World Cup. Mahinda Rajapaksa International Cricket Stadium in Hambantota and Pallekele International Cricket Stadium in Kandy are being looked at as possible venues for the matches that will be played behind closed doors.

On Sunday, speaking to *PTI*, BCCI president Sourav Ganguly said: "We have planned a white ball series for the senior men's team during the month of July where they will play T20 Internationals and ODIs in Sri Lanka." While Ganguly has more or less confirmed it, sources in the board circles revealed that the tour is far from certain. There seems to be a slight setback in the relations between the two boards after SLC voted for Imran Khwaja in the ICC chair election, who eventually lost to Greg Barclay, who was backed by the BCCI.

BCCI president Sourav Ganguly

In case the tour does go ahead, apart from picking a completely different squad, the BCCI will have to look for new support staff for the series. The indications are that Paras Mhambrey, who has been part of India A and Under-19 coaching set up, will accompany the team to Sri Lanka along with other support staff at the National Cricket Academy.

Though, India's first-choice players will not be available, the BCCI can still send a strong squad including the likes of Shikhar Dhawan, Prithvi Shaw, Suryakumar Yadav, Sanju Samson, Yuzvendra Chahal, Bhuvneshwar Kumar among others.

Although the Indian team doesn't have any engagements between the World Test Championship final, which ends on June 22 and the England series, which begins on August 2, the quarantine rules in the UK make it impossible for the first team to travel to Sri Lanka.

NO MATCH FOR LEWANDOWSKI

Robert Lewandowski scored yet another hat-trick for Bayern Munich on Saturday as his extraordinary goal-scoring run continued against Borussia Moenchengladbach. He now has 275 goals in 348 games in the Bundesliga, which includes his earlier stint with Dortmund.

BARCA HOLD ATLETICO

Barcelona played out a 0-0 draw against Atletico Madrid in La Liga on Saturday. Atletico are on top with 77 points from 35 games while Barcelona are on 75 points from the same number of matches.

BAYERN JUGGERNAUT ROLLS ON

Bayern Munich celebrated their 9th consecutive Bundesliga title in style by beating Borussia Moenchengladbach 6-0 on Saturday. They had already sealed the title prior to their match after Borussia Dortmund defeated second-placed RB Leipzig 3-2.

Robert Lewandowski, Thomas Mueller and Manuel Neuer celebrate Bayern Munich's title triumph at the Allianz Arena in Munich | AFP

UNITED MAKE CITY WAIT

Manchester City's wait to seal the Premier League title was extended after rivals Manchester United beat 10-man Aston Villa 3-1 on Sunday. Bruno Fernandes, Mason Greenwood and Edinson Cavani scored for Manchester United while Villa's only goal came from Bertrand Traore. With City losing to Chelsea on Saturday, Pep Guardiola's boys needed United to lose to Villa for them to clinch the top spot with three games in hand. Liverpool kept their top-four hopes alive after beating Southampton 2-0. Sadio Mane and Thiago Alcantara scored for Liverpool.

27 Goals scored by Bruno Fernandes this season, the most by a midfielder in England since Frank Lampard in 2009-10.

39 No of goals scored by Robert Lewandowski in the Bundesliga this season, one short of Gerd Mueller's all-time record.

01 Mo Salah's assist for Sadio Mane's header was the first time the duo have combined for a goal in the EPL this season.

Hamilton wins Spanish GP

AFP @ Barcelona

LEWIS Hamilton claimed his fifth successive Spanish Grand Prix on Sunday ahead of Red Bull's Max Verstappen after a Mercedes pit-stop masterstroke.

Hamilton moved on to 98 career wins after a surprise second change of tyres hoodwinked Red Bull to lift him 14 points clear of Verstappen in the drivers' standings.

"It was a really great strategy by the team. What a day!" beamed Hamilton, who was quick to acknowledge the smattering of fans allowed in to watch, a rare occurrence in the time of coronavirus. "I saw a British flag out there which I haven't seen for a long time." Hamilton had set off from pole for the 100th time but was beaten to the first corner by Verstappen, with Charles Leclerc dishing out the same treatment on Valtteri Bottas on turn two.

STANDINGS (Top-5): 1. Lewis Hamilton Mercedes 1:33:07.680; 2. Max Verstappen Red Bull +15.841s; 3. Valtteri Bottas Mercedes +26.610s; 4. Charles Leclerc Ferrari +54.616s; 5. Sergio Perez Red Bull +63.671s

ROAD TO TOKYO

Mindset is the key and I'm constantly working on it: Atanu

AYANTAN CHOWDHURY @ New Delhi

IT has been a challenging time for sports in general as Covid-19 rages on. It has affected India's Olympic-bound archers with their participation in World Cup Stage II jeopardized due to the rising number of cases and strict quarantine rules. But Stage I gold medallist Atanu Das is not letting these things get in his way as he is fully focussed on clinching an Olympic medal. In a freewheeling chat with this daily, the recurve archer spoke about the various controversies in the last couple of months and how his mindset has helped him overcome obstacles. He also spoke about his marriage, something that he feels has helped him evolve as an athlete. Excerpts...

How much of a blow is missing out on the World Cup Stage II. What do you think of the whole issue?
We were made aware of the 10-day quarantine rule in Switzerland and it would have been difficult to perform after spending so much time in isolation. The federation tried their best but it did not work out. Of course, it is disappointing to miss out. We now have to focus on the upcoming challenges and make sure that we perform to our potential. But we hope the same is not repeated in Paris as the same quarantine rules apply there.

Only one World Cup left prior to the Olympics. Is this lack of tournaments going to affect the archers?
There is no substitute for international competitions. The goal was to maximise the opportunities we have during these times but there is no point in crying over spilt milk. Our aim is to do well in Tokyo and ensure the women's team qualifies.

Did you expect the gold in Guatemala? Are you in best possible frame of mind currently?
This was our first international tournament in almost one-and-a-half years. To be honest, there was a lot of nervousness and trepidation but excitement as well to finally step out wearing the national colours. Ever since the last Olympics, I have been working a lot on the mind apart from the technical aspects. And that has helped a lot when it comes to performing under pressure. That was on display during Stage I and as far as technical flaws are concerned, I have re-watched footage and I'm looking to improve on those aspects. I'm hoping to try out a few more things in Paris before zeroing in on a plan for Tokyo.

Lot of big names did not take part in Stage I. Do you think that helped India?
I do not agree with this point. Archery is not about big names or past glories of a country. On any given day, a new champion can emerge. And we have proven our calibre in the Worlds as well. So big name or small, it does not matter. What matters is shooting your best on that particular day. All of us are working daily and in Paris, I'm sure we will shoot well and the women's team will also surely qualify.

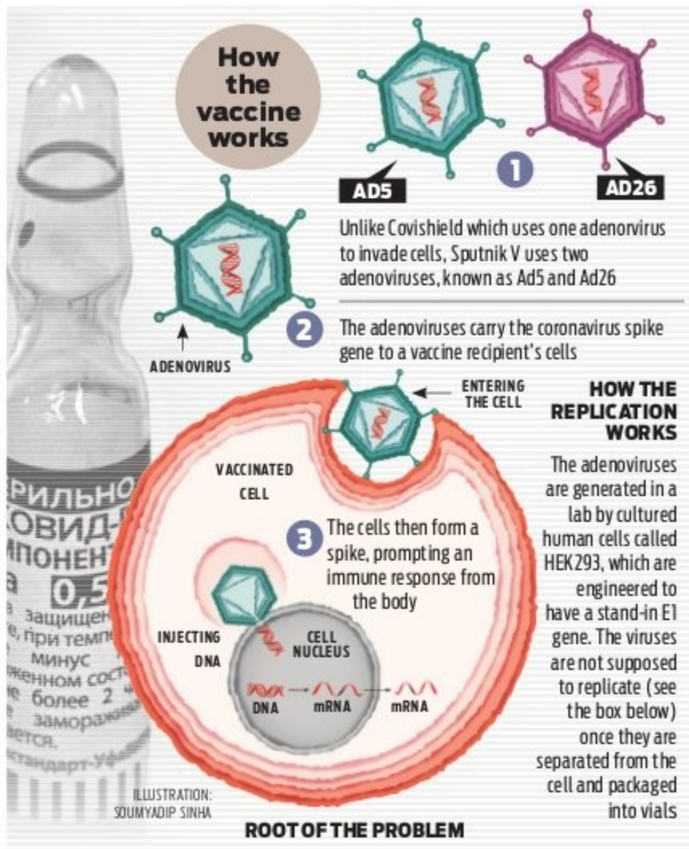
How do you handle pressure and has your marriage with Deepika Kumari helped you, both technical and from a mental standpoint?
After our marriage, Guatemala was our first competition and both of us won gold so that is a major positive (laughs). But yes, she is far more experienced than me and she has many more international medals to her name. She can be a motivator at some point and then a partner. We both interchange our roles to help the other. And that is something which has helped for sure. And pressure will always be there but the mental training I have been doing involves channeling those (pressure) into positive emotions and remaining calm. Mindset is the key and that is what I'm constantly working on.

Some virus RNA can be reverse transcribed and inserted into the human genome, finds a new study in *PNAS*, which may explain why some people who had already recovered from Covid-19 would sometimes inexplicably test positive on a PCR test weeks or even months later. Genetic sequences from the vrius can integrate into the genome of the host cell.

EXFILE • MEDICINE

Confusion over Sputnik V data after Brazil veto

An unusual row broke out over the Russian Covid-19 vaccine, Sputnik V, in April after a Brazilian health agency declined to authorise it for import because of safety and quality concerns. The debate drew global attention from scientists as the Sputnik V has been authorised in around 60 countries, including Brazil and India, which cannot afford to turn down vaccine shots. Though there was initial hesitation around the vaccine due to a rushed approval process, the world was reassured when peer-reviewed study results in the *Lancet* showed the Sputnik V to be safe and 91.6% effective at preventing symptomatic Covid-19. We take a look at the recent developments



Unlike Covishield which uses one adenorvirus to invade cells, Sputnik V uses two adenoviruses, known as Ad5 and Ad26

The adenoviruses carry the coronavirus spike gene to a vaccine recipient's cells

HOW THE REPLICATION WORKS

The adenoviruses are generated in a lab by cultured human cells called HEK293, which are engineered to have a stand-in E1 gene. The viruses are not supposed to replicate (see the box below) once they are separated from the cell and packaged into vials

ROOT OF THE PROBLEM

The agency determined that the booster shot was "replication competent" -- meaning that once inside the body, the adenoviruses can continue to multiply. They added that this had likely occurred because of a manufacturing problem. Both the adenoviruses in the vaccine are supposed to stripped of a reproduction gene called E1

100

As per Russian quality control documents flagged by Anvisa, Sputnik V batches have "less than 100 replication-capable particles per dose". The agency wants the number to be absolute zero before giving approval for import

The agency says that this shows that replication does occur in vaccinated people, which could put those who are immunocompromised at risk

Media reports say that Anvisa displayed clips of the agency talking to representatives of the vaccine's developer, Gamaleya. They said that they are aware of the risk, but changing the vaccine production process "would take too much time"

ISSUE ONLY WITH SPUTNIK V

Other vaccines that use the adenovirus component, such as those made by AstraZeneca and Johnson & Johnson, don't show any sign of replication, Gustavo Mendes, general manager of medicines and biological products at Anvisa, told a press conference

WHERE SPUTNIK HAS LANDED

Countries that are using or have signed up for Russian vaccines as of April end

OTHER SAFETY CONCERNS

Anvisa said Gamaleya had not reported detailed information on 63 cases of adverse events and four deaths that occurred during the clinical trials. It also said that its inspectors did not get sufficient access to manufacturing and quality-control sites of the vaccine. This opaqueness alone is sufficient to reject the import request, Anvisa's Mendes said, even if the replicating adenoviruses were not a concern

A healthcare worker administers a dose of Russia's Sputnik V Covid-19 vaccine to a patient | AFP

MANY SCIENTISTS DISAGREE

Brazil's former science minister, Sergio Rezende, told *Science* magazine that he was surprised by how the agency presented information. "Anvisa did not clarify anything," he said. Immunologist Ricardo Gazzinelli, president of the Brazilian Immunology Society, said the row is "an unnecessary turmoil," the magazine reported

Others in the global medical community also said that Anvisa had jumped the gun and that the safety issues highlighted by the regulator can be easily addressed

Gamaleya went on the offensive after Anvisa's snub, threatening to sue the regulator for "spreading false and inaccurate information"

COMPILED BY: ARAVINDAKSHAN S

China took 'reckless' gamble with crash landing of rocket debris

22-ton rocket core re-entered Earth's atmosphere early morning, streaked across West Asian skies, plunged into Indian Ocean, putting end to mild global anxiety

SPACE

BEIJING: China's space agency said a core segment of its biggest rocket reentered Earth's atmosphere above the Maldives in the Indian Ocean and that most of it burned up early Sunday.

Harvard astrophysicist Jonathan McDowell, who tracked the tumbling rocket part, said on Twitter, "An ocean reentry was always statistically the most likely. It appears China won its gamble... But it was still reckless."

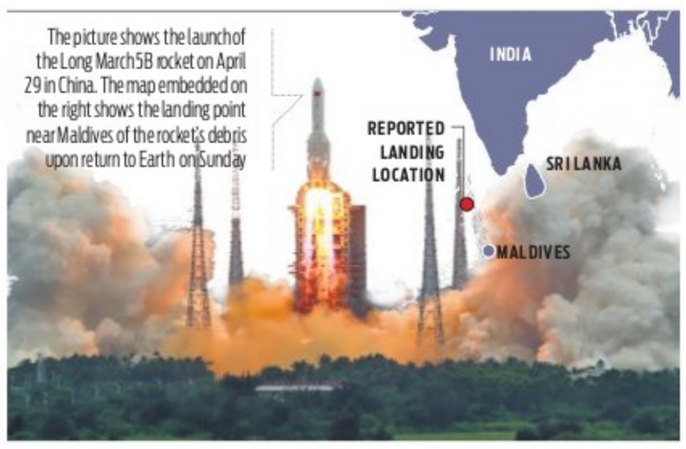
People in Jordan, Oman and Saudi Arabia reported sightings of the Chinese rocket debris on social media, with scores of users posting footage of the debris piercing the early dawn skies over the Middle East.

Usually, discarded rocket stages reenter the atmosphere soon after liftoff, normally over water, and don't go into orbit.

China's official Xinhua News Agency later clarified that reentry occurred Sunday at 10:24 a.m. Beijing time. "The vast majority of items were burned beyond recognition during the reentry process," the report said.

Despite that, NASA Administrator Sen. Bill Nelson issued a statement saying: "It is clear that China is failing to meet responsible standards regarding their space debris."

The roughly 30-meter (100-foot) long rocket stage is among the biggest space debris to fall to Earth. China's space program, with its close military links, hasn't said why it put the main component of the rocket into space rather than allowing it to fall back to earth soon after discharging its payload, as is usual in such operations.



The picture shows the launch of the Long March 5B rocket on April 29 in China. The map embedded on the right shows the landing point near Maldives of the rocket's debris upon return to Earth on Sunday

The Long March 5B rocket carried the main module of China's first permanent space station — Tianhe, or Heavenly Harmony — into orbit on April 29. China plans 10 more launches to carry additional parts of the space station into orbit.

An 18-ton rocket that fell last May was the heaviest debris to fall uncontrolled since the former Soviet space station Salyut 7 in 1991.

China's first-ever space station, Tiangong-1, crashed into the Pacific Ocean in 2016 after Beijing confirmed it had lost control. In 2019, the space agency controlled the demolition of its second station, Tiangong-2, in the atmosphere. Both had been briefly occupied by Chinese astronauts as precursors to China's permanent station, now under construction.

In March, debris from a Falcon 9 rocket launched by U.S. aeronautics company SpaceX fell to Earth in Washington and on the Oregon coast.

China was heavily criticized after sending a missile to destroy a defunct weather satellite in 2007, creating a large field of hazardous debris imperiling and other spacecraft.

Experiment proves sharks use Earth's magnetic field as GPS

BIOLOGY

WASHINGTON: Forget Google Maps -- sharks can read the Earth's magnetic field like a GPS navigator to find their way, a study in Current Biology showed last week.

Lead author Bryan Keller told AFP the paper vindicates a decades-old theory about how the aquatic predators are able to migrate vast distances, swim in arrow-straight lines, and return to their precise point of origin.

Sharks are also known to have a fine-tuned electrosensing ability that helps them detect prey.

All these factors led scientists to believe that sharks -- like sea turtles and certain other species -- can glean their position and orientation using the magnetic field generated deep within our planet.

But there had been no way of proving it, until now.

For their research, Keller, project leader of Save Our Seas Foundation Florida, decided to study a small member of the shark family, called bonnetheads, that are native to the Gulf of Mexico.

The team caught 20 juvenile bonnetheads then exposed them to a field-altering device called a Merritt coil – a wooden cube with vertically and horizontally arranged copper wiring running along it, and a shark tank at the center.

The device was used to simulate magnetic field conditions that corresponded to different locations on Earth, hundreds of kilometers from where the bonnetheads were caught.

As predicted, the sharks oriented themselves northward when the magnetic conditions simulated a position south of where they were caught.

They didn't orient themselves in any direction when the coil told them they were already at their home.

"This work provides clarity for how they maintain navigational success," said Keller.

Male balding gene tied to Covid severity

RESEARCH

MEN with a common form of hormone-sensitive hair loss may be more prone to being hospitalised and at risk for ICU admission for Covid-19.

Androgenetic alopecia is a condition of permanent hair loss from the scalp. A study, led by researchers at US-based biotechnology company Applied Biology, found an association between the androgen receptor (AR) gene and Covid-19.

Among men hospitalised with Covid, 79 per cent had androgenetic alopecia compared to 31-53 per cent that would be expected in a similar aged match population, the results showed.

The team found that androgenetic alopecia is controlled by variations in the AR gene, which affects how sensitive the body is to androgens (hormones such as testosterone).

In addition, an enzyme called TMPRSS2, which is key to Covid-19 infection, is also androgen sensitive and may be affected by variations in the AR gene. They also identified a region located in the AR gene associated with both androgen sensitivity and androgenetic alopecia.

For the study, the team conducted a genetic analysis of 65 men hospitalised with Covid.

They found that men with certain structural differences in the AR gene were more likely to develop severe Covid. The differences "could be used as a biomarker to help identify male Covid-19 patients most at risk for ICU admissions", said Andy Goren, Chief Medical Officer, at Applied Biology.

DRACULA AIDS VAX CAMPAIGN

A banner reading in Romanian "Who's afraid of vaccine?" and depicting syringes as vampire fangs advertises the vaccination marathon at Romania's forbidding Bran Castle, widely known as the inspiration for the lair of Dracula. Tourists who get the jab get a certificate that says they are welcome "for the coming 100 years" and get a free tour of the "torture chamber" | AFP

Transplant recipients have low vax immunity

MEDICINE

NEW YORK: Patients, who had organ transplants, remain vulnerable to Covid-19 infections even after a second vaccine dose, finds a study that urges people who are immunocompromised to strictly adhere to wearing masks, and maintain physical distancing, even after vaccination.

The study, led by researchers at Johns Hopkins University, showed that after two doses of Moderna or Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine against SARS-CoV-2 – the virus that causes Covid 19, just 54 per cent people who have received solid organ transplants produced sufficient antibodies. The findings are published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA).

"Transplant recipients should not assume that two vaccine doses guarantee sufficient immunity against SARS-CoV-2 any more than it did after just one dose," said Dorry Segev, Professor of Surgery and Epidemiology at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine.

"Based on our findings, we recommend that transplant recipients and other immunocompromised patients continue to practice strict Covid-19 safety precautions, even after vaccination," added lead author Brian Boyarsky, surgeon at the varsity.

People who receive solid organ transplants (such as hearts, lungs and kidneys) often must take drugs to suppress their immune systems and prevent rejection. Such regimens may interfere with a transplant recipient's ability to make antibodies to foreign substances, including the protective ones produced in response to vaccines, the researchers said. The study evaluated this immunogenic response following vaccination in 658 transplant recipients, none of whom had a prior diagnosis of Covid-19.

VITAL SYSTEMS

Ransomware attack shuts down US' largest fuel pipeline

TECHNOLOGY

WASHINGTON: The largest fuel pipeline system in the United States was forced to shut down its entire network after a ransomware attack, the operating company said in a statement on Sunday.

The Colonial Pipeline Company ships gasoline and jet fuel from the Gulf Coast of Texas to the populous East Coast through 8,850 km of pipeline, serving 50 million consumers.

The government is planning for various scenarios and working with state and local authorities on measures to mitigate any potential supply issues, officials said Saturday. The attack is unlikely to affect gasoline supply and prices unless it leads to a prolonged shutdown, experts said.

Colonial Pipeline did not say what was demanded or who made the demand. Ransomware attacks are typically carried out by criminal hackers who scramble data, paralyzing victim networks.

The attack on the company, which says it delivers roughly 45% of fuel consumed on the East Coast, underscores again the vulnerabilities of critical infrastructure to damaging cyberattacks that threaten to impede operations. It presents a new challenge for the US, which is still dealing with its response to major hacks from months ago, including a massive breach of government agencies and corporations for which the U.S. sanctioned Russia last month.

In this case, Colonial Pipeline said the ransomware attack Friday affected some of its information technology systems and that the company moved "proactively" to take certain systems offline, halting

pipeline operations. In an earlier statement, it said it was "taking steps to understand and resolve this issue" with an eye toward returning to normal operations.

The Alpharetta, Georgia-based company transports gasoline, diesel, jet fuel and home heating oil from refineries located on the Gulf Coast through pipelines running from Texas to New Jersey.

The private cybersecurity firm FireEye said it's been hired to manage the incident response investigation.

A leading expert in industrial control systems, Dragos CEO Robert Lee, said systems such as those that directly manage the pipeline's operation have been increasingly connected to computer networks in the past decade.

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DAY'S DIARY

Tallest building

On this day in 2013 construction workers cheered as the final piece of the spire for the One World Trade Center was hoisted in place, making it the tallest in the western hemisphere

THE FINAL PIECE

The huge piece, measuring 408 feet, was craned slowly up, completing the final piece in the new jewel of the Manhattan skyline. The WTC was constructed by David Childs

THE DESIGN

The surface of the base has more than 2,000 pieces of prismatic glass. The tower ascends 69 stories its edges chamfered back to form eight isosceles triangles

A REPLACEMENT

One World Trade Center officially opened on November 3, 2014. The new tower replaced the Twin Towers, which were destroyed by terrorist attacks on 9/11

Bigg Boss Kannada season-8 suspended

PG 4

Bengalureans settled in different parts of the world tell CE about the particular anxiety brought on by distance from loved ones during times of distress, how they're coping and helping out

BEYOND BORDERS

Illustration: AMIT BANDRE

Niranjan Setty

Anoshka Jhaveri

SIMRAN AHUJA

LOS Angeles-based singer-songwriter Saahas Patil may be miles away from India, but the deadly second wave of Covid-19 infections has given him sleepless nights. "I have been barely sleeping 4-5 hours a day because I'm worried about my mother and sister who are back home in Bengaluru," says Patil, who moved to the USA in 2015.

"There's a creeping sense of reality with this wave. You don't even have to actively track the number of cases or deaths to know it's bad, I've been hearing of the struggle from my friends. A junior of mine from school passed away due to Covid and that was a shock because we're the same age," says the 31-year-old, who has been relying on regular therapy, among other things, to cope better.

Patil is not alone. Bengalureans in different parts of the world are wracked by anxiety as they watch the situation play out from afar. Roshini R, who is pursuing her Masters in Münster, Germany, finds herself feeling helpless. "I think it has bothered me more than what I would have experienced being in Bengaluru. This is mainly because I'm away from my family and loved ones and I just don't know what the exact situation is," she says.

For Anoshka Jhaveri, the anxiety has led to her staying in touch with her parents and sisters more often, sometimes multiple times a day. "My father was to get his first dose of the vaccine but there were no slots available," says the animator based in Vancouver, Canada. With everyone knowing someone who has been affected or lost a loved one - people's fears have increased. "If something were to happen, I can't even rely on beds or other help being available," says the 24-year-old.

While panic persists, those abroad are also finding ways to help. Niranjan Setty, a pulmonologist in the UK, put out a tweet offering medical advice on Covid-19 management at home.

"I would have loved to come back home to Bengaluru but since that is not possible, I am trying my best to help from here. About 80-90 per cent of people have mild symptoms but a fever or cough, especially now, can lead to anxiety. So I try to assist and reassure people who reach out to me. In some cases, they ask me for a second opinion," says Setty. Now, he sleeps at 2am instead of 10.30pm as he tries to respond to everyone who contacts him on Twitter.

Jhaveri too has been doing her bit, and has donated money to two patients. The intention is to keep the effort going as and when she comes across more people in need. While artists in India have held fundraising concerts, Patil says, "I haven't planned any yet but it's something I would love to do in LA to help people in Bengaluru."

Setty, perhaps, sums up these efforts best: "We may be in different countries but we're all in this together."

> *You don't even have to actively track the number of cases or deaths to know it's bad, I've been hearing of the struggle from my friends* - **Saahas Patil, singer**

CURBING THE CRISIS

A Bengaluru-based NGO is running a campaign to provide plasma for Covid patients

EXPRESS FEATURES

DURING a pandemic of the scale we are currently seeing, everyone is doing whatever they can to help. Bengaluru, which is one of the worst-affected cities in the country, has a high number of recovered Covid-19 patients but not enough plasma donors. Ekal Yuva Bengaluru, the youth wing of the NGO Ekal Abhiyan Bengaluru chapter, is currently running a campaign around plasma donation to bridge that gap.

The idea came to Vikram Agarwal, chairperson of Ekal Yuva Bengaluru, a little over a week ago when he learned of a request for O +ve plasma. He went ahead and donated plasma, and posted a picture of it on social media to encourage other people to do the same.

Seeing his post, three of his friends got in touch with him to find out how they could go about it. Agarwal took it further and proposed a campaign on Ekal Yuva's Bengaluru group.

"In the last 10 days we got 125 people to donate plasma and we were able to provide 49 patients with plasma," says Agarawal, adding that approximately they had collected 93 units.

Apart from Agarwal, the team comprises 21 people including Anil Sarda, Saket Garg, Dr Abhishek Modi, Vikas Gupta, Mohan Agarwal, Sanjay Baid. Considering the chaos people face when they struggle to get immediate medical attention for loved ones, the organisation is working on a system that divides work among its volunteers.

> **The problem is that there are a huge number of patients but hardly any plasma donors. So more people need to come forward to donate, especially celebrities who could post their pictures on their social media pages to inspire others**
>
> Vikram Agarwal, chairperson, Ekal Yuva Bengaluru

"Everyone has a specific role. Some of the responsibilities that people are assigned include calling plasma donors, checking their antibodies to assess eligibility for plasma donation, banking the plasma, checking requirements as per verified leads and then calling the beneficiary and donating the plasma," the 40-year-old businessman says.

Agarwal is working along with his team and urges more people to come forward to donate. "The problem is that there are a huge number of patients but hardly any plasma donors. So more people need to come forward to donate, especially celebrities who could post their pictures on their social media pages to inspire others," he says.

A volunteer donates plasma as part of Ekal Yuva's campaign for Covid relief

Former international cricketer Venkatesh Prasad talks to CE on the reception of his 'new band' VenkaBoys and how it felt to record their 'first song'

To cool to be old school

MONIKA MONALISA

BENGALURU'S very own Venkatesh Prasad, who wowed audiences as a member of the Indian men's national team, says his new avatar, although temporary, was a lot of fun.

Venky, as he is fondly known, tried his hand at VenkaBoys, a boy band along with fellow ex-cricketers Maninder Singh, Saba Karim and Javagal Srinath. The former Men in Blue star in an ad video recently released by Cred, a credit card bill payment app, which earlier made Rahul Dravid 'Indiranagar ka Gunda'. The video has been viewed over 34 lakh times on Cred's YouTube channel.

All dressed in white, the former international players give off a very Backstreet Boys vibe in the ad which has witty lyrics which acknowledge the passage of time. However, the OGs of the 1990s make sure you know that they still got their swag.

"If you are one of those Gen Z, you might not know me. Just go and ask your daddy!" goes one line, and reminds us that there was cricket even before T20: "Don't forget us because of T20s," the song says, coz they are the 'OGs'.

Prasad tells CE he had no idea what the end result would look like, since everything was shot against a green screen, but reuniting with the old gang was fun.

"It was a little bit like a reunion, talking cricket and the things that have changed in the game and so on. Even on screen too, we were talking and laughing and I was able to reinvent my cool side," says Prasad, adding that it was fun doing the shoot.

The video got quite a bit of attention from Netizans, including Indian batsman Rohit Sharma, who retweeted the video saying, "From listening to you coach me on the field, to now listening to you sing while I am on my way to the stadium. Venky bhai....it's been a journey."

Prasad says, as a coach, people know him very differently. "I was very, very focused as coach. I could not be chilled out as a coach, it was just off field (that I could be so). When I coached the Indian under-19, back in 2004-05, Rohit Sharma, Pujara, Ravinder Javeja were all part of the team," Prasad recalls.

On setting the record straight when a Twitter user called his dismissal of Aamer Sohail during the 1996 World Cup, Prasad shyly says, "It's not about a comeback but rather stating the facts to someone."

REMEMBERING 1996

I was happy that I could inspire a lot of people. It was one of those events that you couldn't write a script for. If you are playing in an international match, you have to own responsibility. It does not matter if you are a newcomer or an experienced player. You are there to do a job to the best of your abilities
Venkatesh Prasad, former India fast bowler

Helping hand

When a well-wisher from Malleswaram mentioned the grim situation of healthcare workers at government hospitals, Sandalwood star Sriimurali didn't waste any time in lending a helping hand. He extended his support to frontline workers by providing essentials, a 'small token of gratitude' for those working endless hours in PPE suits without a single complaint.

Daughters say I love you, mom

Instagram was filled with sweet posts on Sunday as Sandalwood stars poured their love for their mothers online. Priyanka Upendra called herself lucky and blessed, while Aindrita Ray's caption brings a tear to the eye with: "You taught me all except how to live without you". Hitha Chandrashekar, on the other hand, uploaded a cute throwback photo on her Instagram story.

Debolina Ray, a city-based blogger, who runs She Knows Grub, dishes out food-related trivia in this weekly series. So, answer these questions and find out how much of a foodie you are.

GRUB HUB

THE QUIZ WILL BE PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY

Send answers to **bengalurucityexpress@gmail.com** with the subject line **'Food quiz'**

The correct answers and names of the first three respondents are published here. The first prize winner this week will receive a complimentary voucher (worth ₹2,500) from Sanchez**

THE RIGHT ANSWERS

1) Kori Gassi from Mangalore; 2) Bengaluru Oota Company; 3) Rava idli

FIRST THREE TO GET IT RIGHT

1. Bindu Ajit
2. Ramesh Menon
3. Ashwin Lakshmikanth

****Conditions apply**

WHAT WHEN WHY WHERE

YUMMY IN THE TUMMY

Sheeshkabab brings a Ramadan special iftar feast through combo kits. Enjoy authentic iftar snacks like samosas, chicken kebabs, desserts along with the mouthwatering Persian delicacy like mutton koobideh and chicken joojeh, tandoori prawns, tandoori fish, mutton sheekh, amongst others.
Details: 25802222

JAPANESE DECOR

Inspired by the ancient art of Japanese paper folding, the Origami collection by Kaleen India explores geometry and line —from realistic depictions of folded birds and flowers to abstract lined graphics.
Available at: kaleen-india.com

STAY LEMON FRESH

The Body Shop has launched a new skin purifying and protecting routine. The range is made with lemon essential oil, which is known for its purifying properties. The range includes hair and body wash (Rs 1,195), face wash (Rs 945), hand wash (Rs 795), hair mist (Rs 1,345), and hand and body lotion (Rs 1,195). **Available at:** thebodyshop.in

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Author Cordis Paldano's debut novel *The Dwarf, the Girl and the Holy Goat* takes his readers on the adventures with Charlie, Inaya, and Munni, while touching upon issues like gender, caste, class, communalism, disability, religious and political fundamentalism, war and violence, as well as animal rights. During his session at the NLF Reading Challenge 2021, Paldano will talk about from treating a child as an equal, the need to make children aware of societal discrepancies from an early age and giving them the freedom to decide between right and wrong.
When: May 14, 6pm
Register: neevliteraturefestival.org

CHECK OUT SOME EMOTIONAL AND CREATIVE STORIES AND POEMS BY ARTISTES LIKE SHUBHAM NEGI, DHRUV SHARMA, UTKARSH. WHEN: MAY 16, DETAILS: BOOKMYSHOW

Iftar Feast

Enjoy a line up of Ramadan feast by Dindigul Thalappakatti. The iftar meals includes chicken/mutton biryani, haleem, pack of dry fruits and parathas. To place orders Whatsapp 91500 07909. Also available on Swiggy and Zomato.

Story-telling Workshop

Learn the art of storytelling with artiste Jay Kumar Hariharan. The month-long online session will help you understand the importance of story telling frameworks, power narratives, apprehensions around storytelling, tips for effective storytelling, and more. **When:** Ongoing Details: bookmyshow

Running effect

Reebok introduces the spring summer variant of the Liquifect 180, a high-performance running shoe that has great cushioning, long-lasting comfort and lock in support from heel to toe. It comes in different colours and is priced at Rs 6,599. **Available at** shop4reebok.com, FlipKart and Amazon

'Raw' deal

Catch Naked: A Comedian₹s Tale by comic Papa CJ. Naked is Papa CJ's most honest, raw and compelling comedy show till date. And this is not just a comedy special. Drama. Poetry. Storytelling. Music. Dance. Comedy. Tragedy. And Hope. These are some of the elements you can expect from this critically acclaimed multi-genre one-man theatrical production.
When: May 14
Details: bookmyshow.com

Festive feast

This Ramadan, celebrate the holy month with Aloft Bengaluru Cessna Business Park, a Marriott International Hotel, as they whip up Mutton Shami Kabab, Murgh Reshmi Kebab, Nihari, Biryanis, Kabuli Pulao & Sheer Khurma
When: Till May 12 **Contact:** +918884452271

QUICK FIX

What's cooking

IN YOUR KITCHEN?
We are hungry for recipes with minimum ingredients and maximum flavours. Share your quick-fix with us, along with step-by-step photos, at cityexpresschn@gmail.com.

DESI TADKA EGGS

INGREDIENTS

- **Eggs:** 2 ■ **Salt:** as per taste ■ **Curry leaves:** 5-6 ■ **Chilli:** 1
- **Hing:** 1 tsp ■ **Chilli oil/sauce:** as per taste ■ **Oil** to roast

METHOD

- In a pan, drizzle some oil and roast the curry leaves and chilli with hing. Do so till the leaves are crunchy.
- Once done, shift into a bowl. Now, in some pan, add the eggs and fry them. Add salt. Let it fry till desired yolk consistency is achieved.
- Transfer eggs to a plate. Drizzle chilli oil or sauce.
- Top with roasted curry leaves, chilli and hing.

— Apoorva Jain, Bengaluru

FIT BIT

BADDHA VIRABHADRASANA

(HUMBLE WARRIOR POSE)

In Sanskrit, 'baddha' means bound, 'vira' means hero, 'bhadra' means friend, and 'asana' means pose It is a forward bending asana that requires flexibility in the hips, legs, shoulders and back. The variations of all Virabhadrasana are named for a fierce warrior in Hindu mythology, Virabhadra. This asana draws focus inward in a simulation of bowing to the Divine. It fosters acceptance of the body and the mind. Traditionally, it is believed to open the Svadisthana Chakra, which governs abundance, joy, wellness, creativity and sexuality. It also stimulates the Sahasrara Chakra, which connects the practitioner to divine energy and the higher Self.

STEPS

- Start with Adho Mukha Svanasana (Downward Dog Pose).
- Inhale and lift your right leg up. Point your toes towards the ceiling and keep your knees straight.
- Exhale and come into Ashwa Sanchalasana (The Equestrian Pose).
- Inhale and lift your torso up.
- Stretch your arms forward and slowly come into Virabhadrasana I (Warrior Pose I).
- Stay in this pose for 3 long breaths.
- Inhale and stretch your arms sideways.
- Bring your arms behind your back and interlock your fingers.
- Stretch your arms to open your shoulder blades.
- Inhale and bend back as much as you can till your chest faces the ceiling.
- Exhale and bend forward. Lift your arms up and try to touch the crown of your head to the floor.
- Close your eyes and stay in this pose for 3 to 6 long breaths.
- To come out of this pose, you can release your hands first and then stretch your arms to reach the floor.
- Exhale and come into Adho Mukha Svanasana.

BENEFITS

- Regular practice can relieve stress and anxiety.
- Helps stimulate the nervous system.
- Stretches and strengthens leg muscles, knees, ankles, shoulders, back and arms.
- Helps open the lungs and chest.
- Helps improve spinal flexibility.
- Massages the abdominal organs.
- Energises the entire body.

LIMITATIONS

- Those who have been suffering from high blood pressure, heart problems, head, shoulder, neck or knee injuries, avoid this pose.

— by N Elumalai, PhD scholar (Yoga Science) at Meenakshi Academy of Higher Education & Research, Chennai

SOUND BOARD

VEDANTA TALKS
These are talks given by Swami Sarvapriyananda at the Vedanta Society of New York (founded by Swami Vivekananda in 1894). Based on the Vedas, the sacred scriptures of India, Vedanta affirms the oneness of existence, the divinity of the soul, and the harmony of religions.
- On Apple Podcast

BELLWETHERS PODCAST
Bellwethers Podcast aims to enlighten minds with featuring some leaders, entrepreneurs and influencers from all around the world and share stories of how they achieved what everyone else thought was impossible.
- On Spotify

THEN WHAT ELSE?
Comedians Chitan and Sarvesh invite other artists to talk about anything and everything under the sun, until of course, one of them runs out of things to say and responds with the inevitable "Alright... then what else?"
- On Apple Podcasts

THE PEOPLE'S PHARMACY
Pharmacologist Joe Graedon and medical anthropologist Terry Graedon talk to leading experts to discuss their research on issues relating to drugs, herbs, home remedies, vitamins and related health topics.
- On Apple Podcast

CURIOSITY DAILY
Discovery's Cody Gough and Ashley Hamer will help you learn about your mind and body, outer space and the depths of the sea, and how history shaped the world into what it is today.
- On Google Podcast

POPULAR ON YOUTUBE

FIRST RANK RAJU
Raju, a bookish young man, fails a job interview owing to his lack of practical knowledge and contemplates suicide. So his parents decide to make him more pragmatic and ready to face the real world.
- Cast: Gurunandan, Apoorva Gowda

DIA
Dia takes three years to confess her feelings to Rohith but after a terrible accident, she is told he does not survive. Later, when she starts seeing Adi, she finds out that Rohith is still alive.
- Cast: Kushi, Pruthvi Ambaar

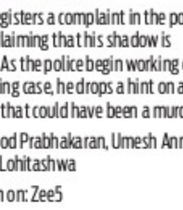
RANNA
Sharat assures his ageing grandfather that he will reunite him with his estranged daughter. To fulfil his promise, he goes to work for the woman's family as a driver.
- Cast: Sudeep, Rachita Ram

SANGLIYANA
An upright police officer is determined to wipe out corruption in the society. Putting his life at risk, he has to fend off several obstacles that come his way.
Cast: Shankar Nag, Devraj,

Scan this QR code to find out how your favourite celebs are coping with the lockdown.

WHAT'S ON TED TALKS

1 IN ON A SECRET? THAT'S DRAMATIC IRONY BY CHRISTOPHER WARNER
You're in a movie theater, watching the new horror flick. The audience knows something that the main character does not. What's that feeling — the one that makes you want to shout at the screen? Christopher Warner identifies this storytelling device as dramatic irony.



2 WHAT MAKES A HERO? BY MATTHEW WINKLER
What trials unite not only Harry Potter or Frodo Baggins but many of literature's most interesting heroes? And what do ordinary people have in common with these literary heroes? Matthew Winkler takes us step-by-step through the crucial events that make or break a hero.

3 CARING FOR ENGINEERED TISSUE BY NINA TANDON
Tissue engineer and TED Fellow Nina Tandon is growing artificial hearts and bones. To do that, she needs new ways of caring for artificially grown cells — techniques she's developed by the simple but powerful method of copying their natural environments.

4 THE GLOBAL COOPERATION THAT ACCELERATED THE COVID-19 VACCINES BY KIRAN MAZUMDAR-SHAW
Biotech entrepreneur Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw shares lessons learned from the global effort to develop COVID-19 vaccines. Learn more about the innovative partnerships that helped create the vaccines and how India became a crucial player in delivering millions of doses to the world.

5 WHATEVER HAPPENED TO ACID RAIN? BY JOESPH GOFFMAN
In 1963, scientists studying Hubbard Brook Experimental Forest made a shocking discovery. Their most recent rainfall samples were nearly 100 times more acidic than usual; which could destroy the area's ecosystems in a matter of decades. What was causing this deadly rainfall? And what could be done to stop it?

NOW STREAMING

REGIONAL

RAJA RANGUSKI (Tamil)
Raja, a police constable, falls in love with Ranguski, an aspiring writer, and tries to woo her through phone calls. However, he soon gets implicated in the murder of Maria, Ranguski's neighbour.
Cast: Shirish Saravanan, Chandini Tamilarasan, Anupama Kumar, Kalloori Vinoth
- Watch on: Zee5

YUVARATHNAA (Kannada)
A reputed college that is now on the verge of closing due to the privatisation of the education system and political reasons. The college principal fights against privatisation and the protagonist supports his vision.
Cast: Puneeth Rajkumar, Sayyeshaa Saigal, Sonu Gowda
- Watch on: Amazon Prime Video

SIMMBA (Hindi)
Simmba, a corrupt police officer, works for Durva, an influential smuggler. However, his life takes an unusual turn when he decides to avenge a woman who was assaulted by Durva's brothers.
Cast: Ranveer Singh, Sara Ali Khan, Sonu Sood, Siddharth Jadhav
- Watch on: Zee5

RAAT BAAKI HAI (Hindi)
After his fiancé is murdered, Karthik the prime suspect goes on the run and lands at the palatial house of Vasuki, who happens to be his ex-flame. The ex-lovers take a trip down memory lane and relive their deepest darkest desires, and the agony of sweet revenge.
Cast: Anup Soni, Paoli Dam, Rahul Dev, Dipannita Sharma
- Watch on: Zee5

ALA MODALAINDI (Telugu)
A man who has gone through a major heartbreak meets another woman and as they spend more time together, he falls in love. He is dismayed to find out that she is engaged but fate has other plans.
Cast: Nani, Nithya Menen, Sneha Ullal, Ashish Vidyarthi
- Watch on: Zee5

All the streaming apps can be accessed on smartphones and smart TVs with Internet connection.

SHADOW (Kannada)
A man registers a complaint in the police station claiming that his shadow is missing. As the police begin working on the baffling case, he drops a hint on an accident that could have been a murder.
Cast: Vinod Prabhakaran, Umesh Anna, Sharath Lohitashwa
- Watch on: Zee5

VIRUS (Malayalam)
The state of Kerala faces a tremendous outbreak of the life-threatening Nipah virus. However, a group of courageous individuals risk their lives in an attempt to curb the epidemic.
Cast: Tovino Thomas, Revathi, Parvathy Thiruvothu
- Watch on: Zee5

FOREIGN

VINCENZO (Korean)
During a visit to his motherland, a Korean-Italian mafia lawyer gives a conglomerate a taste of its own medicine with a side of justice.
Cast: Song Joong-ki, Jeon Yeo-been, Ok Taecyeon, Kwak Dong-yeon
- Watch on: Netflix

SCOOB! (English)
Shaggy and Scooby learn that Dick Dastardly, a villain, is out to capture Scooby. With the help of masked superhero Blue Falcon, the Mystery Inc gang sets out to thwart the supercriminal's evil plans.
Cast: Frank Welker, Will Forte, Gina Rodriguez, Zac Efron
- Watch on: Amazon Prime Video

THE BLIND SIDE (English)
Michael, a homeless African-American teenager, is adopted by a Caucasian family who help him overcome his learning difficulties and achieve excellence in American football.
Cast: Sandra Bullock, Lily Collins, Quinton Aaron, Tim McGraw
- Watch on: Netflix

THE SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION (English)

Andy Dufresne, a successful banker, is arrested for the murders of his wife and her lover, and is sentenced to life imprisonment at the Shawshank prison. He becomes the most unconventional prisoner.
Cast: Morgan Freeman, Tim Robbins, Bob Gunton, William Sadler
- Watch on: Amazon Prime Video

SUBSCRIPTION
Prime Video: ₹ 129 per month
Zee 5: ₹ 99 per month
Netflix: ₹ 199 per month

Brighter is better

PAIRED WITH PANACHE
Anuja Pandey

Neon makeup trend has been appearing on our Instagram feed since the A-listers have been seen in neon lip or eye shades and nail colours. So if you are determined to pull off this cool and casual vibe then let us just re-create it and bring about fun and cheer in these intimidating times. After all, we need to love the mirror while we stay safe at home.

Neon eyes

So swap the smoky eye with the pink version this spring. An electric green or yellow lid, or a bright pink lipstick bring in a tide of colours so don't hesitate to go bold and experiment. The trick is to keep your skin dewy and natural and go bright on the eyes. You must use a neutral shade for shadowing the lids and then dab a neon shadow in the tear ducts. Use black liner first and then draw the wings and inner corners with contrasting neons. Charumathi G R, makeup artist and founder of Studio Makeover, says, "In colour makeup, focus on eyes and area around with neon colours. From pinks or fluorescent yellows or a technocolor rainbow situation, when done correctly, this trend gives off a casual cool vibe! Complete it with a subtle swipe of blue mascara and defined eyebrows which not only frame your eyes but define them too."

The monochromatic look doesn't only apply to clothes so you can use neon blue or flamingo as an overall look. And if you happen to be a 'more is more' philosophy follower then stick to neutral skin with rocking combinations and bright neon or metallic lips.

Pic: Charumathi G R

Keep your skin dewy when you go bright on the eyes

Pic: CDivine Nail Studio

Add a hint of neon to your summer French manicure

Rainbow nails

Whether you like your nails natural or acrylic, blinding lights or minimalistic, long or short or any shape, there's a thing for everyone. With nail art offering various inspirational designs and hues, life is full of choices when it comes to nails. Neons in bright or mixed with neutral hues are the thing to go for this summer. The subtle ombrés or flaming orange, you too can have the Cardi B nails and make a statement. Add some sparkle to get the childhood brightness or a jewel.

A hint of neon to your summer French manicure or a colour blocked French manicure is the thing to go for. Shikha Sridhar, founder of Divine Nail Studio, says, "Neons have been declared by many fashion experts as the go-to colour for spring and summer and is the epitome of glamour. It compliments even the palest skin tones, it's fun, eye-catching and pretty, all at the same time! It can be paired with almost any outfit and gives that extra fun pop so there's no reason not to take that leap of faith and be a head-turner this season."

(The author is a social media influencer and lifestyle coach)

HEALING YOUR SPIRIT

As fear of infection and uncertainty about the future looms, many people are seeking out spiritual healing and tarot card readers

> We have been getting many calls from people who are living under the fear of infection and uncertainty about the future. The calls have gone up so much that the strength of our staff has gone up from three to 26 now.
>
> Sheelaa M Bajaj, numerologist

MONIKA MONALISA

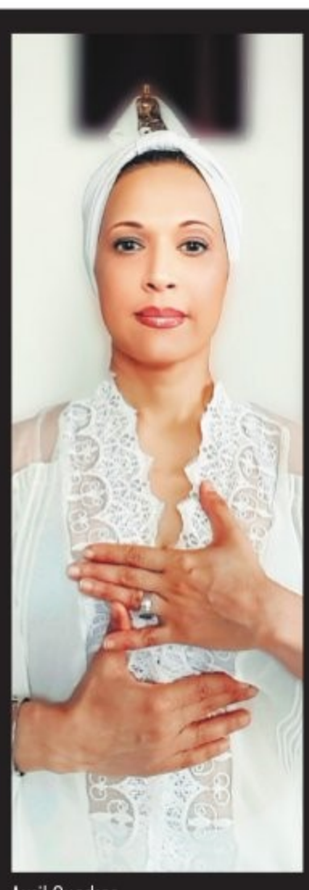
Up until recently, for a large majority of people, Covid-19 was something that happened to others. But in the past month, disease and death have hit closer to home, taking a toll on people's mental health. To calm their turbulent minds, many people are seeking out spiritual healing and approaching tarot card readers.

Celebrity numerologist and tarot card reader Sheelaa M Bajaj says more people are approaching her than before. "From the first lockdown, we have been getting many calls from people who are living under the fear of infection and uncertainty about the future. The calls have gone up so much that the strength of our staff has gone up from three to 26 now," says Bajaj, who recently shifted base from Bengaluru to Dubai.

She says that it is only normal for people to have negative feelings during this time. "In a situation like this, one is bound to feel anxious. But there is always a spiritual way like meditation, reiki healing etc that people can follow, to deal with the situation," says Bajaj.

Tarot reader Revathy Krishnakumar agrees. She says people are currently living in such fear energy that they are bound to be surrounded by negativity. "Lifestyle has changed a lot with work from home coming into the picture. People have lost their me-time, and as a result, stress levels have gone up," says Krishnakumar, who has been practising tarot reading since 2013.

Her advice to people is 'to create their own happiness' at home by making it a positive place by lighting lamps, doing meditation, and playing calming music. Mindful living and happiness coach Avril Quadros says that one can deal with these fears if one finds their triggers. "People are not used to living out of their comfort zone and this is a situation that they are not used to, which leads to depression and anxiety. The best way to deal with it is to shift your focus to happiness rather than the negative things in your life, because the things you focus on expand," says Quadros, a singer-turned-Kundalini-yoga practitioner. She says that a mindset of gratitude could make a world of difference and start you on your journey to be more mentally healthy.



Avril Quadros

Revathy Krishnakumar

CITY READ

UNIVERSITY RECEIVES AWARD

A team comprising Anakha Angeline Anilesh, Dhwani Nagesh, Nidhi Kumar, Raghuram Pillai, Shreeya Rangnekar, Tanishq Toor and Tulja Sharad from University Law College, Bangalore University participated in the Willem Vis Moot Court Competition. The team has received the Eric Bergsten Award as the 16th best finalists in the official rounds.

TALK ON NEW BOOK ON GANDHI

A new episode of BIC Talks, an initiative by Bangalore International Centre, features Gopalkrishna Gandhi in conversation with scholar and author Sunil Khilnani about the latest book *Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi: Restless as Mercury: My Life as a Young Man*. To check out the session, check BIC's website.

Round and round he goes

ARE YOU GAME?
Anusha Ganapathi

(This economics graduate spends her leisure time preparing for the zombie apocalypse)

'Loop Hero' is an idle game disguised as a deck-building strategy RPG. The 16-bit graphics with partially undecipherable iconography adds to the pretense of complex strategy. You feel entitled to the hero's success, after all, you did change their jewellery once a loop. But, I am oversimplifying here. Let me explain why I have over 30 hours clocked on this game.

'The dragon goes under the bridge...': Loop Hero is a strategy RPG, till you understand its idle gameplay motivation. Hero finds themself in a looped path, without memory of the past. They go round and round, fighting strange monsters to obtain cards. The cards help them uncover a part of what the past contained. They slowly begin rebuilding what they lost. And so go several 'one more rounds' on a path that gradually gets as clogged as storm drains during monsoon.

'... through the loop...': Loop Hero is an idle game, but not completely laissez-faire. You can't stop skeleton and slime ball from smacking each other. You can only play down cards and pray for an 'orb of evolution' to manifest. You may methodically arrange mountains and meadows, but watch the hero slayed by a goblin that materialised due to your incessant card-placement interference. What you can control though, is luck. The luck accumulates when you generate resources, and this again, involves the trudging journey of path clearance.

'...and finally...': Loop Hero is an idle game when you figure out the logic engine. You can't stop skeleton and slime ball from smacking each other. So why try? Loop Hero is an RPG manager, not an RPG micro-manager. It's an inefficient deck builder, in that you get to decide the level of grind for your expedition. It forces you to be less involved in micro-decisions as you get better. The baby hero is now armed with cards that makes it an independent teenager, now slamming the bedroom door in your face. You are free to scroll mindlessly through social media, and just occasionally return to fidget with card placements. The poor dialogue only dissociates you further from liking any of the enemies you steamroll while marching forward.

'...into the castle!': Loop Hero is an idle game that knots you securely into its circle of unending gameplay. You now have a rogue with the best axes, a warrior with the best attack skills, and a necromancer with a large skeleton army. Enemies have nothing on the endurance of your now seasoned hero. The returns get higher as you get stronger, deluding you into a sense of overpowered security. But you must know when to stop and exit the loop, like I am doing right now.

GAMING ON A MOUNTAIN

PLAY ON
Arjun Sukumaran

(Arjun is a gamer, book lover and an all-round renaissance man)

Become a part of the Sherpa community, hunt and set camps to earn points in this thrilling board game Nanga Parbat

Nanga Parbat, named for the ninth-highest mountain in the world, is a two-player game designed by Steve Finn. In this game, players take on the roles of Sherpa communities that live on and around the titular mountain — you'll hunt game, set up base camps and try to have more points than your opponent when the game ends.

What's interesting about Nanga Parbat, it's immediately clear, is the foundation it's built on; specifically, that of ultimate tic-tac-toe. Ultimate tic-tac-toe (which goes by other names as well), if you're not familiar with it, is essentially a giant tic-tac-toe grid where each space also contains a miniature tic-tac-toe board. Whoever wins, for example, the game in the centre space gets to mark an X or an O in that space on the larger grid. However, the hook is that the space you choose to claim also dictates where your opponent must play their next move, and that same twist is what Nanga Parbat has incorporated.

Instead of a grid, you have six areas that comprise the various regions of the mountain arranged in a 3-2-1 pyramid; each region itself consisting of six spaces that hold various animals that can be hunted. The active region, indicated by the presence of the Guide token, is where the current turn must be taken. For example, if on my turn I choose to claim the topmost space in region #6 (the rightmost one on the lower level), I will then move the guide to region #1 for my opponent's turn. The reason I've spent so long talking about this mechanism is because it's at the heart of what makes this game an absolute joy to play — it's incredibly tight, and every move you make has to be carefully weighed not only for its immediate benefit to you but also the opportunities that it might afford to your opponent. It almost feels claustrophobic at times, because of how intertwined each turn feels with those that came before and will come after. This is one of the most interactive two-player games I've ever played, which leads to some great moments when you're able to force your opponent to set you up for a better play.

The cleverness doesn't stop there, thankfully. Each animal you hunt can be used to activate a special power that lets you manipulate the game state in some way, which adds another layer to the calculations necessary. Points are what you need to win, though, and each player only gets the chance to score five times during the game - making timing a massive part of Nanga Parbat, because if you leave it too late, your opponent might sneak in before you.

Steve Finn is best known for Biblios, which is a game I've spoken about here before and also happens to be one of the best card games I've ever played. The only real criticism of Biblios that I've ever made is that it doesn't play particularly well as a two-player game; but, with Nanga Parbat's release, Steve Finn proves that he can create a duel as engaging and as fun as anything else out there.

WHAT'S NEW?

Galaxy Trucker

Galaxy Trucker is a phenomenal game, and one that's permanently on my need-to-play-this-more list, which is why I was quite excited to hear that CGE is planning a new streamlined edition that makes the game more accessible and easier to get started with for new players.

Save Patient Zero

A game about racing to try to find an antidote to a disease is perhaps a bit too elevant right now, but Save Patient Zero is still worth a look — team-based games are far too rare, and team-based deduction games are even scarcer.

My Father's Work

Renegade Game Studios doesn't use Kickstarter, but it's easy to see why they chose to crowdfund My Father's Work — this is a passion project with a deluxe treatment. This is a game about being multiple mad scientists in the Victorian period, as you'll play the descendants of the original disturbed doctor trying to complete their ancestor's work.

HIT JODI OF VINOD PRABHAKAR AND SONAL MONTEIRO IN DEMAND

After the duo became popular with Darshan-starrer *Roberrt*, many filmmakers are keen to bring them back as lead pair on screen

A SHARDHAA

Darshan-starrer *Roberrt*, released on March 11, not only adjudged as a blockbuster, but also brought to the fore a hit jodi — Vinod Prabhakar and Sonal Monteiro. They played pivotal roles in Tharun Kishore Sudhir's directorial. And buzz is that a handful of filmmakers, including director Hariprasad Jayanna, are working towards bringing these two actors as lead pair in their next project. Ask Vinod about this and he confirms the developments, also revealing that they are being offered various scripts and are receiving many enquiries. However, nothing is finalised so far. "Raghav and Tanu, the characters we played in *Roberrt*, have become popular among the audience. People, who initially addressed me as Tiger, have now started calling me Raghav anna, and Sonal as Tanu. It's an added bonus when we are recognised by the characters we play. That is the bigger success. Those who would meet us on sets would enquire as to when they will see us together on screen again. Even directors, who want to cash in on our pairing have narrated us different scripts. We are sure to work together again, but which project is something we have to decide. An official confirmation on this will be made once we have a suitable story, and when the director and production house agree. If not for the pandemic and lockdown, we would have locked a subject, but now it might take a little more time," he says.

Vinod Prabhakar and Sonal Monteiro

Vinod, post-*Roberrt*, is currently focusing on *Lankasura* directed by Pramod Kumar. "I'm sporting a beard for Lankasura, for which we have completed 40 per cent of the shoot. We are now waiting to begin the next portions, which will be resumed once we get permission to shoot," he says. Meanwhile, the actor has lined up at least half a dozen of films, but he plans to take them up one by one. Sonal is waiting for the release of *Talwarpete*, and *Shambo Shiva Shankara*, which is now in post-production. She also has *Buddivantha 2* in the pipeline. The actor recently was in Goa to shoot for *Sugar Factory* and completed filming crucial portions before the lockdown.

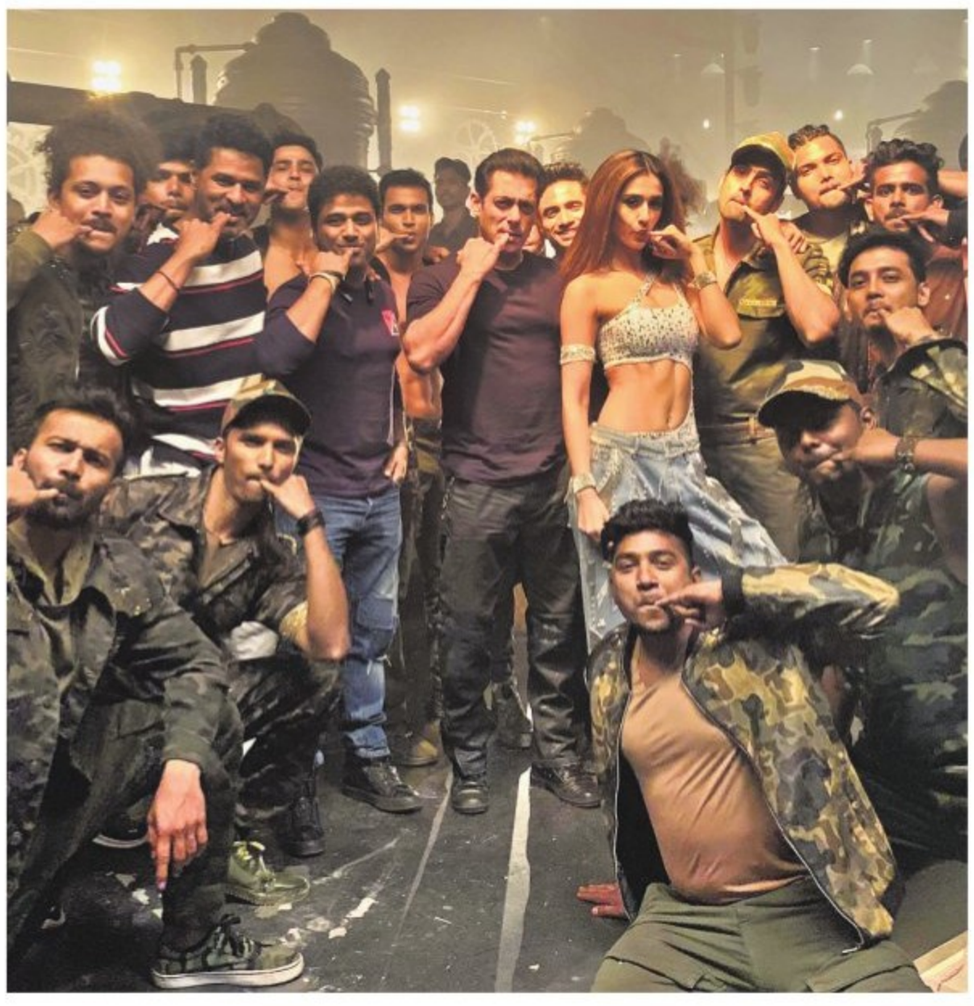
Sudeep's *Bigg Boss Kannada* Season 8 suspended due to Covid-19

CE FEATURES

Bigg Boss Kannada Season 8, hosted by Kichcha Sudeep, has suspended its telecast due to Covid-19. The show, which began on February 25, completed 71 days before calling it quits on Sunday. An official confirmation was made by Parameshwar Gundkal, business head, Colors Kannada, on Saturday. The message on Instagram read, "It's' been 71 days since *Bigg Boss season 8* started. Mixed emotions come to my mind when I stand by the PCR and watch the 11 contestants around the house. They are all happy, not aware of the difficulties and challenges faced by people outside. The contestants are safe and are in isolation. We will be calling them outside on Sunday after informing them about the current developments that are taking place outside. We are also making arrangements to send them home safely.(sic)" "Hundreds of days of work, and hundreds of people have worked as a team on this. The dream of a team that worked diligently is being halted halfway. It was a difficult decision that has been taken with a heavy heart."

With Divya Uruguda exiting the house due to illness, the other contestants who were left in the *Bigg Boss* house were Aravind KP, Raghu Gowda, Vaishnavi, Manjunath Pavagada, Divya Suresh, Prashanth Sambargi, Chakravarthy Chandrachud, Nidhi Subbaiah, Subha Poonja, and Priyanka Thimmesh. Sudeep, who was unwell, could not host the weekend episodes and was unavailable for the rest of the show due to lockdown restrictions that have been imposed till May 25.

Sudeep



SEETI MAAR RECORDS FASTEST 100 MILLION VIEWS ON YOUTUBE

CE FEATURES

Seeti Maar, the first track from Salman Khan's *Radhe: Your Most Wanted Bhai*, has become the fastest song to get over 100 million views on YouTube. The song's composer, Devi Sri Prasad, shared a special video with behind-the-scenes images from the shoot of *Seeti Maar*.

Talking about the composition, Salman Khan said in the video, "Devi Prasad has done the track and he is outstanding."

Happy with the immense love the track's reception, DSP shared, "I am elated with the response the audience has showered for *Seeti Maar*. I am grateful to Salman Bhai and Prabhu Deva Master for trusting me with it. I am glad that *Seeti Maar* created the magic yet again."

DSP has a busy lineup with Allu Arjun's *Pushpa*, PSPK 28 with Pawan Kalyan, *Khiladi* with Ravi Teja, Daggubati Venkatesh's *F3*, and Ram Pothineni's upcoming film tentatively referred to as RAPO19. He also has some Bollywood projects in the pipeline.

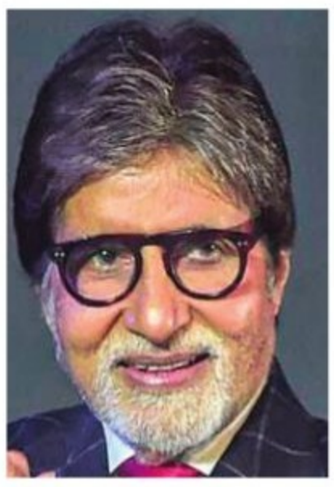
Amitabh Bachchan returns to host *KBC 13*

CE FEATURES

Amitabh Bachchan will be returning to host the 13th season of the popular quiz show, *Kaun Banega Crorepati* (KBC). The show's broadcast network, Sony TV confirmed the news recently. First aired in 2000, the show gained instant popularity among Indian households and has remained one of the most-watched shows on Indian television ever since. The show has also played a crucial role in surging the popularity of Amitabh Bachchan, who has hosted 11 out of the 12 seasons so far, barring season three in 2007, when Shah Rukh Khan stepped into the shoes of the *Big B*.

The latest season of the show concluded earlier this year in January and the registrations for the coming season will be open beginning tomorrow. The showrunners are expected to reveal the airing date soon.

On the acting front, Amitabh Bachchan was last seen in the Shoojit Sircar directorial *Gulabo Sitabo* and has multiple projects including *Brahmastra*, *Good Bye*, and *Chehre* in his upcoming slate of releases.



I have never played the role of a cop in my entire career: Shahana Goswami

CE FEATURES

Shahana stars alongside Sanjay Kapoor and Karma Takapa in Amazon Prime Video's supernatural thriller series Shahana Goswami plays a cop in Amazon Prime Video's upcoming supernatural thriller, *The Last Hour*. Directed by Amit Kumar, the series follows two cops — Arup Singh played by Sanjay Kapoor and Lipika Bora played by Shahana — who try to uncover a mysterious death in a Himalayan town. Unable to crack the case, Arup ropes in Dev (Karma Takapa), a local shaman with the gift of communicating with the dead.

Talking about the show, Shahana said, "When I read the script, I was really in awe. It felt like I was reading a thriller book which I couldn't put down. I really liked how something as complex as shamanic traditions was weaved in, in a beautiful and subtle way."

Shahana shared this is the first time she's playing a cop on screen. "I have never played the role of a cop in my entire career. So when I was offered the part, that was a big draw for me as well. I hadn't ever held a gun and got to hold a real gun! This show gave me the opportunity to tick that off the list," she said.

Sahana Gowswami

Max Greenfield, Marisol Nichols, and Betsy Brandt to star in *The Valet* remake

CE FEATURES

Actors Max Greenfield, Marisol Nichols, Betsy Brandt, and legendary Mexican screen and television icon Carmen Salinas have been roped in for Liongate's English remake of the French hit film The Valet.

Other than the latest additions, the film also stars Eugenio Derbez and Samara Weaving.

According to Deadline, Weaving stars as Olivia, a movie star who enlists a parking valet named Antonio (Derbez) to pose as her lover to cover for a relationship with a married man. As a valet, the hard-working Antonio usually flies under the radar, but his ruse with Olivia thrusts him into the spotlight and brings him to see himself more clearly than ever before.

While Greenfield (The Neighborhood, New Girl) is all set to play Vincent Royce, a handsome business mogul, Nichols (Riverdale) will play Isabel, Antonio's ex.

Brandt (Breaking Bad) will portray Kathryn Royce, Vincent's wife, and Salinas, an actor with more than 110 movies and 30 television series to her credit, will play Cecilia, Antonio's live-in mother.

The remake is directed by Richard Wong. The original French film was written and directed by Francis Veber.

The upcoming film has a screenplay by Rob Greenberg and Bob Fisher. It is produced by Derbez and his producing partner Ben Odell through their 3Pas Studios banner. Meredith Wieck and Aaron Edmonds are overseeing for Lionsgate.